This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

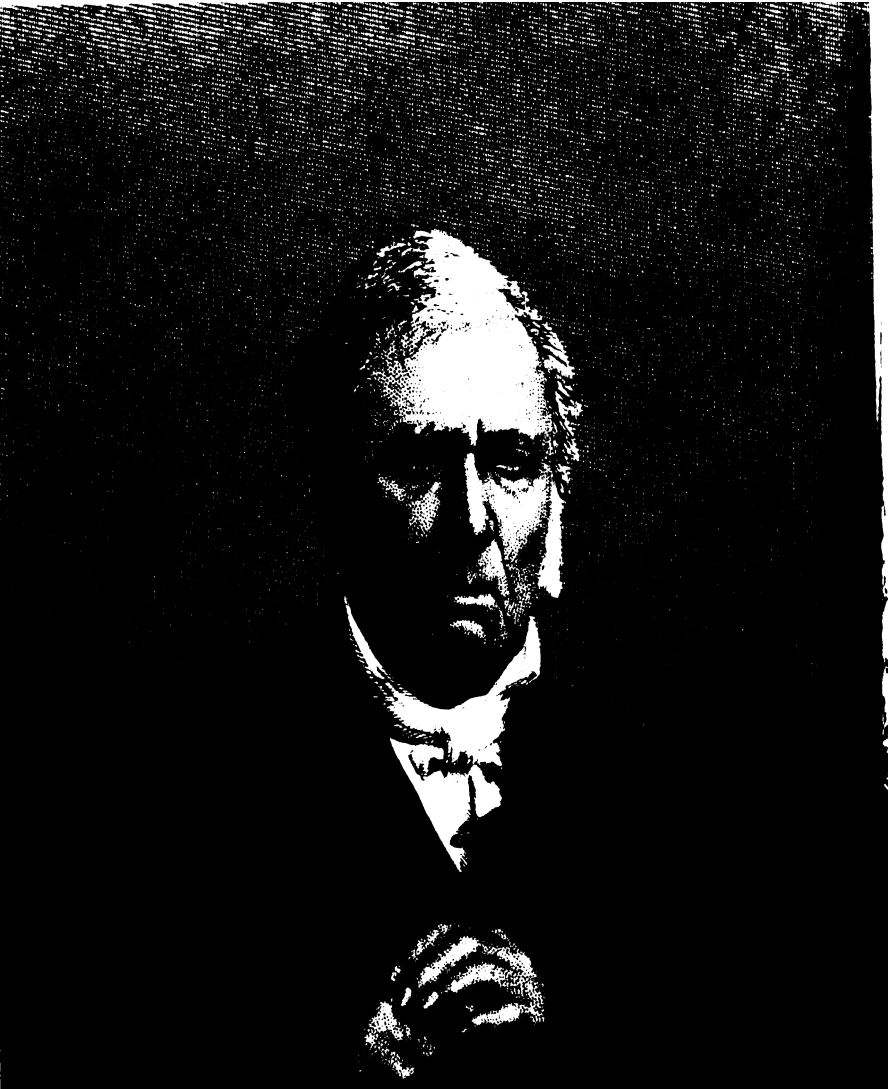
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



Memoir of the Rev. Peter Labagh, D.D.

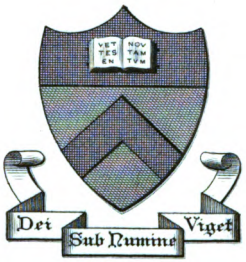
John Adams Todd, Gabriel Ludlow,
Reformed Church in America. Board of publication

Digitized by Google

5503
.55
ANNEX LIB.

Wm. F. Hageman.

Library of



Princeton University.

Presented by

Mrs. J. S. Hageman, Jr.

Digitized by Google

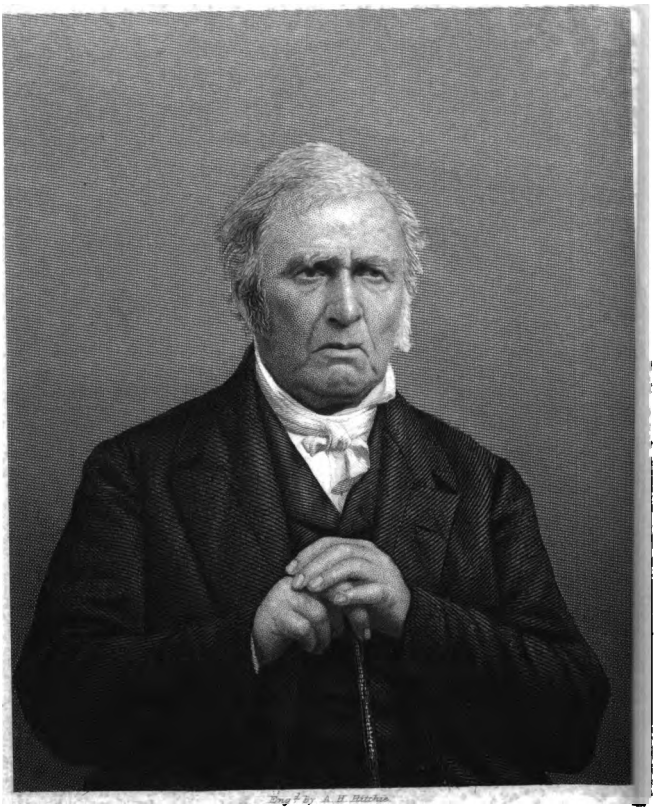
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



yours affectionately

Peter Labadie

Digitized by Google

D.

OWN, N. Y.

Pastor of the

HURCH,

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. PETER LABAGH, D.D.

WITH NOTICES OF THE

History of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church

IN NORTH AMERICA.

BY THE

REV. JOHN A. TODD,

PASTOR OF THE SECOND REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH OF TARRYTOWN, N. Y.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

The Sermon preached at Dr. Labagh's funeral, by the Rev. Gabriel Ludlow, D.D., Pastor of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, of Shannock, New Jersey.

NEW YORK:

BOARD OF PUBLICATION

OF THE

REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH,

SYNOD'S ROOMS, NO. 61 FRANKLIN STREET.

1860.

Digitized by Google

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by
REV. THOMAS C. STRONG,
On behalf of the Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in North America, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

HOSFORD & CO.,
STATIONERS AND PRINTERS,
57 and 59 William St., N. Y.

Digitized by Google

"He stands in the desk, that grave old man,
With an eye still bright, though his cheek is wan,
And his long white locks are backward rolled
From his noble brow of classic mould,
And his form, though bent by the weight of years,
Somewhat of its primal beauty wears.

He opens the page of the Sacred Word;
Not a whisper, nor low nor loud, is heard;
Even folly assumes a serious look,
As he readeth the words of the Holy Book;
And the thoughtless and gay grow reverent there
As he opens his lips in fervent prayer.

He stands as the grave old prophet stood,
Proclaiming the truth of the living God;
Pouring reproof on the ears of men
Whose hearts are at ease in their folly and sin,
With a challenge of guilt still unforgiven
To the soul unfitted, unmeet for heaven.

Oh, who can but honor that good old man,
As he neareth his threescore years and ten,
Who hath made it the work of his life to bless
Our world in its woe and wickedness,
Still guiding the few, who were wont to stray
In the paths of sin, to the narrow way?

(RECAP)
5503
55
.9
APR 23 1902 160389

Digitized by Google

With a kindly heart, through the lapsing years,
He hath shared our joys, he hath wiped our tears;
He hath bound the wreath on the brow of the bride,
He hath stood by the couch when loved ones died,
Pointing the soul to a glorious heaven,
As the ties which bound it to earth were riven.

Methinks ye'll weep on another day,
When the good old man shall have passed away,
When the last of his ebbing sands have run,
When his labors are o'er, and his work is done.
Who'll care for the flock, and keep the fold,
When his pulse is still and his heart is cold?

Ye'll miss him then; every look and tone
So familiar now, for ever gone,
Will thrill the heart with inward pain,
And ye'll long and listen for them in vain,
When a stranger form and a stranger face
Shall stand in your honored pastor's place."

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

The author of this Memoir desires to inform his readers in the outset, that his only object in preparing this volume for publication was to present in a connected narrative, and thereby, so far as possible, to rescue from oblivion, a number of what he supposed to be interesting and important facts. Interesting and important, as constituting in a large measure the history of an eminent and laborious servant of Christ, who was useful in his day and generation, and who, now that he is dead, deserves a place in the grateful recollections of those whom he has left behind him; and not less so certainly as entering, to some extent, into the history of the Reformed Dutch Church during a period of great embarrassment and difficulty, in which she was obliged, while endeavoring to send the Gospel to the destitute, to maintain an almost incessant struggle for her own existence. From such materials as he has been able to obtain, and they have been by no means abundant, the author has wrought out the following pages, and he now gives them to the press in the hope that, imperfect as they are, they may be found not entirely useless. He has performed his task amidst the constant interruptions and cares which are incident to the pastoral office, and he trusts that this fact will furnish an acceptable apology for whatever faults of arrangement or expression the critical reader may detect.

Digitized by Google

In respect to the facts, he has aimed in all cases to be clear and accurate; and it may be that some will discover what they regard as an unnecessary minuteness of detail in the mention of names, titles, and dates, and matters of a similar nature. Having himself, while preparing this Memoir, experienced in many instances the inconvenience and perplexity arising from the want of specific statements, and learned the value of them in frequently enabling one to determine some doubtful question by a comparison of circumstances, he has thought it better to err on the safe side, and to incur the charge of too much, rather than of too little minuteness.

Before concluding these prefatory remarks, he desires also to make his acknowledgments to Mr. A. H. Ritchie, whose taste and skill as an artist are so universally recognized and admired, for the elegant steel-plate engraving which accompanies this Memoir. Although it was taken from a daguerreotype taken while Dr. Labagh was laboring under the fatigue consequent upon a long drive in Greenwood Cemetery, on a very warm day, it presents his features and general expression with truth and fairness. It will bring back to many, under whose eyes it shall come, a countenance rendered familiar by the pleasant intercourse of years.

This volume is now sent forth with the prayer that by the example of him whose life, labors, and character, it is an humble attempt to exhibit, and by the blessing of God upon its teachings, it may be productive of some good in raising up others to follow in his steps.

Parsonage of the Second Reformed Dutch Church,
Tarrytown, New York, August 12, 1859.

Digitized by Google

MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS — PARENTAGE — LETTERS FROM HIS MOTHER — DEATH OF HIS MOTHER — OBITUARY BY DR. WILSON — RESPECT FOR HER MEMORY — RECORD IN THE FAMILY REGISTER.

YOUR fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? Such was the inquiry by which the ancient messenger of heaven sought to arouse the minds of his countrymen to serious consideration. By it he set forth, to the eye of memory, God's dealings with their nation in the past, and endeavored, in view of the lessons which their history suggested, to enlist them, with more earnest zeal, in the service of their own and their fathers' Benefactor.

In the departure out of this life, but a few months ago, of the venerable patriarch whose history, labors and character, are briefly presented to the reader in the following pages, the voice of Providence reïte-

Digitized by Google

rated to the Christian communion of which he was a minister, the solemn inquiry of the ancient prophet. Another of those living links, how few of them are yet remaining! which bind the Church in her present strength and prosperity to the feeble and struggling Church of half a century ago, is dissolved and lies mouldering in his grave. While to many, doubtless, the intelligence of his death was but the common announcement that another human being had finished his earthly career, and had entered upon his unchanging destiny in the world of spirits; to many others, very many, clergymen as well as laymen, living not only amid the scenes of his former ministry, or in the neighborhood in which he died, but scattered from the banks of the Hudson to those of the Mississippi, the announcement came with a magic power which awakened a crowd of cherished recollections, and called up a thousand incidents of years gone by.

Living, as he had done, for nearly half a century, the precise period was forty-seven years, in the immediate vicinity of the place where he ended his days, and mingling, as had ever been his habit, freely and with the most genial spirit in the society around him, he was not only universally known, but universally respected and beloved. It was natural, therefore, that his death should produce a deep

Digitized by Google

impression upon the public mind, and that his spiritual children, many of whom are in the special service of the Church as the result of his pastoral influence, should mourn his loss as that of a venerated father in Christ.

With regard to his parentage our means of information are far from being ample. Indeed, they are quite the reverse. But, little as we know, it is enough to convince us, beyond a doubt, that the humble piety and the unfaltering devotion to truth and duty, which characterized his life, were the happy result, under the divine blessing, of parental teachings, examples and prayers. In him, if ever, did a gracious providence fulfill the assurance of inspiration that "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

Among the papers of Dr. Labagh there were found, after his death, a number of letters in the Dutch language, which were written to him by his mother, within a few years after his entrance into the ministry, and which he had carefully preserved, for more than half a century, as a sacred memorial of one whom he so deeply loved and revered. A few of

Digitized by Google

these the Rev. Mr. Lubkert, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, at Rhinebeck, New York, has kindly rendered into English, and from them the following are selected as indicative of the spirit of their author.

The first, bearing date September 6, 1798, was evidently written on the occasion of some national calamity, or some more local or private affliction. Whatever it may have been, the writer beheld in it the hand of Him whose way is perfect, and who doeth all things well.

"HACKENSACK, September 6, 1798.

"MUCH BELOVED SON: I have but little time to write to you; nevertheless I cannot but let you know something about the great goodness of the Lord to us and ours, inasmuch as we are yet enjoying good health, and are still in the land of the living, while so many have been cut down at our right hand and our left. Oh, the hand of a righteous God is stretched out over us, and that we yet remain so hardened is a judgment in the midst of judgment. (Dutch: een oordeel in het oordeel). But the eye of the great Samaritan has been cast upon us. . . . . Can our souls be cured through the sufferings of the body? All health must come from Him. We abide under the shadow of His wings. The ninety-first Psalm has

Digitized by Google

been my comfort. The Lord governs and directs. We are all in the hand of God. . . . .

"Your loving mother,

"JUDITH LABAGH,"

The other letter, of January 3, 1800, seems to have been written with the design of giving some New Year's counsels to her son, and breathes a far more earnest desire that he might be distinguished for his faithfulness as a minister of Christ, than for the attainment of reputation or worldly gain.

"HACKENSACK, January 3, 1800.

"MUCH BELOVED SON: I take this opportunity of writing to you a few lines. We have suffered somewhat from the cold, but are now, by the blessing of God, in comfortable health. Your father has been to the city, and our friends there are all in good health. . . . .

"The Lord has spared us again to the beginning of another year. Oh, that this might be a new year for the souls of us all! That we might put off and crucify the old man, and if he be not yet within us, put on the new man! May he grow in order that Christ may be all, and may we have no greater sorrow than that on account of our sins. May the glorious Saviour himself be formed within us.

"In respect to myself, I find a hope within me,

Digitized by Google

strong, I trust, as an anchor in a storm; sometimes strong, and then again weak. My beloved son, may you receive the best gift; be ever near the throne in prayer, that you may possess that blessing which the Lord himself will bestow. Be careful, lest you become a hireling, as is the case with such numbers in the universal sheepfold, where there are many hirelings who seek the sheep for their fleece, but not in order to draw them out of the pit of perdition.

"As we have the word of truth, so may we have it within us, that we may be acceptable before a holy God, and then shall it appear that we have indeed received the new heart. . . . .

"Your loving mother,

"JUDITH LABAGH."

How elevating in their tendency, and how decisive in their moulding power, were the influences under which he grew up from infancy to youth and manhood, and under which, indeed, he lived through all his after years, we can be at no loss to imagine. The character and life of the mother account at once for the character and life of the son. She died in October, 1803, and in the summer of the year following there appeared in "The Christian Monitor," a religious periodical published in the city of New York, an article from the pen of Peter Wilson, LL.D., Professor of Ancient Languages in Columbia College, in

Digitized by Google

which the writer gave a sketch of her history, which though brief is interesting and suggestive. It is as follows:

"JUDITH LABAGH, the subject of this memoir, was born in the city of Amsterdam, in 1738. Her father was a Protestant Refugee who had retired from France, and settled in Holland, where he married, and whence, in the year 1750 he removed to New York, accompanied by his wife and daughter Judith, then about twelve years of age. On the decease of her husband, which happened in England about two years after his settlement in America, the widow with her daughter revisited Holland, and passed over from thence into England; but soon returned to New York, where she supported herself and daughter for several years, by teaching children the elements of the Low Dutch Language. The mother was a humble and exemplary Christian, well known in this city, and like Mary, placed her delight in sitting at Jesus' feet, and implanting the seeds of divine knowlege in the heart of her daughter, and her other pupils. The daughter, a sketch of whose character we have proposed to give, amply repaid the labours of her pious mother, and afforded an eminent illustration of Solomon's declaration, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.'

Digitized by Google

"About seventeen years of age, by the power of divine grace, she became deeply convinced of the depravity of her heart, of her sinfulness against God, and of the necessity of fleeing to the Lord Jesus as the only refuge of perishing sinners, and spent the remainder of her days in endeavouring to adorn the doctrines of her Saviour God.

"When about twenty-four years of age, she was united in marriage to Isaac Labagh, in New York, who is still living.* In this connection for ten or twelve years, she enjoyed a very moderate competency of the good things of this life; but she was content. The experience of divine love in the soul will at all times give a relish to the most scanty portion. At this period she seemed to have a presentiment of the embarrassments and privations of her future life, for she obliged her children, when at school, to take their seats on the benches appropriated to the poor scholars, supported by the Dutch Church, and who attended the same teacher. This conduct has induced the belief, that she foresaw the straits to which she was afterwards to be reduced, and wished to prepare her offspring for the station they were likely to occupy in the world; but most probably her views were more extensive. She knew that sympathy and compassion were not only Christian

*1804.

Digitized by Google

duties necessary to be instilled into the youthful mind, and that by their exercise the pressure of misfortune is greatly alleviated to the sufferer; she knew also, that the distinctions of civil life reach not beyond the grave; that the Sovereign of heaven and earth regards not the outward appearance, but looks at the heart only; and she meant, by her conduct, early to inculcate these truths into the minds of her children. Whatever may have been her views, the Lord, to whom she had dedicated herself and her little family, graciously disappointed her fears. For 'The Lord's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways like the ways of men.'

"At the commencement of the war, the family removed to Hackensack, in New Jersey, where she resided until her death. During this period, and especially, while the war lasted, she could derive little assistance from the labor of her husband, who was destitute of employment; and she was often compelled to procure a scanty subsistence, to which her own exertions were sometimes inadequate, by the sale of her clothes and moveables at an undervalue.

"The object, which, of all worldly concerns lay nearest her heart, was the education of her children: and the Lord disposed a friend who saw and revered her character, to provide for this object, and to carry it far beyond her original expectations.

Digitized by Google

"During her afflictions, and distresses, which were many and various, both corporal and mental, she was unremitting in the performance of the social and relative duties of life, and having a single eye to the glory of her Redeemer and her God, she maintained the even tenor of her way to the end.

"The instruction of her children, in the truths of the Gospel, she deemed a matter of primary importance; and daily, about an hour after noon, she approached the throne of grace with them, to plead on their behalf.

"She corresponded with many pious friends, and her letters attested the humble resignation of her soul, and the ample consolation religion afforded her.

"One morning, after returning from her devotions, she told a friend, that one of her correspondents, whom she affectionately loved, and whose usual place of residence was thirty-six miles distant, was no more. This she concluded from having repeatedly attempted in vain, to pour out her heart in prayer on behalf of that friend. This occurred on Sabbath morning: and it afterwards appeared, that her friend had died the evening before. Thus is 'the secret of the Lord (even sometimes in this peculiar sense) with those that fear him,' when the Master designs, by an intimation of His will, to prevent his faithful followers from falling into evil, or means thereby to sub-

Digitized by Google

serve the purposes of His providence or grace, in a manner conformable to His own written word.

"She was naturally irritable; but grace had subdued the asperities of her nature to the meekness of the lamb. She was a pattern of humility and benevolence, which were doubtless increased and strengthened by a life of dependence on, and nearness to God, as well as by the influence of external circumstances. She was unwearied in well-doing; she lived by faith and not by sight; and her associates were the salt of the earth. In her demeanor, she was singularly modest and unassuming; but was an earnest contender for the faith once delivered to the saints, even at the hazard of her temporal interests; disdaining to yield an iota of truth for the gratification of her best friends.

"Her conversation was always savory, and she never failed, when circumstances would permit, to lead to subjects of practical piety, and to convert every occurrence into a means, or motive, for amelioration of the heart and life.

"Redeeming love was the constant theme of her soul, and she strove to promote the kingdom of Christ whenever opportunity offered.

"After suffering six weeks under a dropsical affection, without lisping a single murmuring word, or betraying the slightest symptom of impatience, she

Digitized by Google

fell asleep on the bosom of her Redeemer on Sabbath morning, October 16th, 1803, in the sixty-fifth year of her age; having several days before, with as much composure as if she had been going a journey on earth, given directions respecting her temporal affairs.

"Thus did she recommend the principles and practice of piety in her life and in her death: for in all her conduct, she eminently displayed the power of divine grace; but

—'Her light
Shone brightest in affliction's night,'"

For such a mother he might well be grateful. That he was grateful, his life abundantly proved. Her memory he ever cherished with the deepest reverence and affection, and in his old age often spoke of her with a tenderness which indicated beyond all mistake, the indelible impressions of his early years. In his family register, which, by a peculiar selection, he kept on a blank leaf of Calvin's Institutes, printed in Dutch, at Amsterdam, in 1650, he recorded her death in the following words:

"On the sixteenth of October, 1803, my dear mother, Judith Labagh, departed this life, aged sixty-four years. She was a tender and affectionate parent, and for nearly forty years a true follower of Christ.

Digitized by Google

Her walk and conversation were profitable to many. In her last moments she evinced that Christian resignation, enjoyed that inward peace, and expressed those soul-reviving hopes, which are the general consequence of a life long devoted to piety. May her children, from her example, learn how to live, and how to die!"

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

Birth — Removal of his Parents to Hackensack — Commences the Study of Latin — Goes to Brooklyn and engages in Business — Leaves his Business and returns to Hackensack — Enters upon a course of Study — Text Books — Goes to Erasmus Hall, Flatbush — *Note:* Dr. Wilson — Religious Experience — Makes a Profession of Religion — Studies Theology with Dr. Froeligh — Accepts a Mission to Kentucky — Completes his Studies under Dr. Livingston — Latin Certificate — Translation.

The Rev. Peter Labagh, D.D., the subject of this memoir, was born November 10, 1773, in Beaver street, in the city of New York. The house in which his parents lived, with hundreds of others which were then standing, and occupied as private residences, in that part of the city, disappeared many years ago, to make room for stores and warehouses, which in their turn gave place to others still larger, as the necessities of business increased. At the opening of the Revolution, as we have already seen, his father, taking his family with him, left New York at

Digitized by Google

the approach of the British, and sought a refuge at Hackensack, New Jersey. At this place Peter's grandfather had formerly resided, and here also, in the year 1732, his father was born. While at Hackensack, where he seems to have spent a considerable portion of his early years, he commenced the study of Latin under the private tuition of Mr. William Kuypers, who was at the time a student in the classical school in that place.

His efforts in this direction, however, were not long continued. Circumstances arose which seemed to render it expedient that he should prepare himself for an active secular occupation. He accordingly left Hackensack, and went to Brooklyn, Long Island, where he prosecuted, but with little interest, the business that had been selected for him, until an opportunity presented itself to engage in an employment more congenial to his tastes. At the instance of his elder brother Isaac, who was already in the ministry of the Reformed Dutch Church, he threw up his business in Brooklyn, and returned to Hackensack, where he entered upon a course of study under that excellent and successful teacher, the Rev. Alexander Miller.* The late Rev. Professor Cannon,

* There is lying before the writer "A Concise Grammar of the English Language; with an Appendix chiefly extracted from Dr.

Digitized by Google

of New Brunswick, was his fellow student, and subsequently became his ministerial neighbor as well as his intimate and life-long friend.

It will be interesting to those who have since passed through the curriculum of a liberal education, to know what were some of the text-books then in use in the classical department of study at Hackensack. In Latin, they were the following, taken up in the order in which they are stated: Corderii, Selectæ e Veteri Testamento, Eutropius, Cornelius Nepos, Cæsar, Sallust, Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, and Horace. In Greek, they were the Greek Testament, Lucian's Dialogues, Xenophon's Anabasis and Memorabilia, Demosthenes de Corona, and Homer's Odyssey and Iliad.

Watts' Logic, and Blair's Rhetoric, the latter of which had then but recently come into use on this side of the Atlantic, having been published in Edinburgh, in 1783, were also text books in their respective departments. The students in the Latin and Greek departments were all formed into an English spelling class every Saturday, and each one in his turn proposed some word to be spelled. In English

Lowth's Critical Notes. By Alexander Miller, A.M. New York: Printed by T. & J. Swords, No. 99 Pearl Street, 1795." It is a volume of one hundred and nineteen pages, and does honor to the author's learning and judgment.

Digitized by Google

Grammar, likewise, they were all exercised regularly once a week.

It might be a question whether both these exercises could not be introduced to advantage into our higher schools of learning, and, perhaps, even into our colleges. One effect at least, would be, to blunt the edge of the British poet's satire, which describes the unfortunate graduate as a person

> "Who, scarcely skilled an English line to pen,
> Scans Attic metres with a critic's ken."

Peter continued without interruption to prosecute his studies, under the care of Mr. Miller, from August, 1790, until April, 1792. He then went to Flatbush, Long Island, where he remained for nearly two years, in the double capacity of scholar and assistant teacher. He enjoyed during all that time the instructions of Peter Wilson, LL.D., the able and pious Principal of Erasmus Hall.* Here, as Dr.

* Dr. Wilson was a native of Scotland, and emigrated to the British Colonies in America in 1763, when he was about seventeen years of age. Although he was not a clergyman, he was fond of theological studies, with which his acquaintance was both accurate and extensive. His interest was strongly enlisted in the cause of the Colonies during the war of the Revolution, and after the peace his influence and efforts were freely expended in support of the religious and benevolent institutions which had their center in the city of New York. Of the various organizations of that nature

Digitized by Google

Wilson testifies, "he applied himself very industriously" to his studies, and made such proficiency in

which were there formed, about the close of the last century and the beginning of the present, there were few, if any, of the more prominent, of which he was not either an officer or a member. He died on the first day of August, 1825, and was buried in the graveyard of the old Dutch Church of Hackensack. On the horizontal slab which rests upon his tomb is inscribed the following epitaph:

"In memory of Peter Wilson, LL.D., who was born in the parish of Ordignhill, in the shire of Bamff, Scotland, November 23d, 1746, and emigrated to this country in 1763. For many years he was the efficient and successful principal of the academy in this place, and afterward of that at Flatbush, Long Island, and for twenty-six years officiated as Professor of Languages in Columbia College. A zealous and successful patriot and Christian, and exemplary in all the public, social, and domestic relations which he sustained, he closed a life of indefatigable activity and constant usefulness, on the 1st of August, 1825, in the seventy-ninth year of his age. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.'"

Of Dr. Wilson's remarkable attainments and ability as a scholar and teacher, there is the following notice in the Life of Alexander Proudfit, D.D., father of Professor Proudfit of Rutgers College, by John Forsyth, D.D., of Newburgh, N. Y.:

"From Mr. Watson's school Mr. Proudfit was removed, about the year 1785, to an academy at Hackensack, N. J., then under the care of that eminent classical scholar and devoted Christian, the late Dr. Peter Wilson. Here he remained, enjoying the best educational advantages which our country then afforded, until March, 1789, when he entered the sophomore class of Columbia College,

Digitized by Google

the various branches of a liberal education as to call forth the warmest commendation.

It was about the time of his return from Flatbush, in 1794, that Mr. Labagh made a profession of religion. He was received into the communion of the Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Solomon Froeligh. In his early religious history there were none of those exhibitions of the power of divine grace, which, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, and of hundreds of others since, indicate, by a marked and sudden change in the outer as well as in the inner life, the precise day or hour in which the work of regeneration has been accomplished. His experience was more like that of Timothy. "From a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation." Their truths had early been instilled into his mind. He had been taught to love them, and to pray habitually to their great and blessed Author. And when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, his heart was at length renewed, and

New York. Dr. Wilson was about the same time called to occupy the professorship of ancient languages in that college, an office which he filled with signal benefit to the institution and honor to himself. He was a ripe scholar, and to him, in a great measure, may be ascribed that taste for classical learning, for the cultivation of which Columbia College has long been distinguished."

Digitized by Google

himself translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, so gently and so tenderly that he became aware of the process only by its effects, it might have been said of him, as truly as it was said of the youthful friend and fellow disciple of Paul the Apostle, "the unfeigned faith that was in him, dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice."

He had long enjoyed the peace and hope of the Christian, and had lived in daily communion with his Saviour, but for some reason which it is impossible now to ascertain, he did not publicly avow himself a disciple of Christ until after the middle of the year 1794. What the reason was, it may easily be conjectured, but for any thing further than conjecture, there is no authority extant. It is not improbable that the delay was owing to the unsettled life, which, in his peculiar circumstances, he was then obliged to lead. During the interval between his early youth and his entrance upon the study of theology, he is found successively first at Hackensack, then in Brooklyn, then again at Hackensack, then at Flatbush, then, for the third time, at Hackensack, and finally at Schraalenburgh. Hackensack, however, was the home of his parents, and there, in due time, he was led by the hand of the good Shepherd to seek for admission into the fold of the Church.

After leaving Dr. Wilson—which he did in June,

Digitized by Google

1794, at the Doctor's own suggestion, as he considered his literary attainments abundantly sufficient to warrant him in commencing the study of theology—and returning to Hackensack, he went to Schraalenburgh,* New Jersey, and entered upon his theological course under the direction of the Rev. Solomon Froeligh, D.D., who was then what was called a Lecturer in that department. The office of Lecturer in theology differed from that of Professor in the fact that the former was authorized only to give instruction, while the latter, in addition to this, possessed the exclusive power of granting the professorial certificate, which was a pre-requisite to examination for licensure by the Classis. His class mates, while studying at Schraalenburgh, were the late Rev. Pro-

* To the reader unacquainted with the peculiar ecclesiastical relations of Dr. Froeligh, it may seem to be a discrepancy to state that Mr. Labagh was received into the communion of the Church at *Hackensack*, then under *Dr. Froeligh's* pastoral care, and to add in immediate connection that he went, in the same year, to *Schraalenburgh*, in order to enjoy *Dr. Froeligh's* instructions in theology. The apparent contradiction is explained by the fact, that, as the villages of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh were but a short distance from each other, the two churches, located in those villages respectively, were united by a collegiate relation, and were both served by one and the same pastor. Dr. Froeligh had his residence at Schraalenburgh. The collegiate relation of the two churches continued down to the year 1833.

Digitized by Google

fessor Cannon, and the late Rev. Garret Mandeville, of Caroline, New York.

After pursuing his theological studies at this place for nearly two years, and while apparently intending to remain still longer, he accepted an invitation to visit New York city in the hope of meeting his brother, the Rev. Isaac Labagh, who was then in attendance at the session of Particular Synod. A call had recently come from Kentucky for a minister of the Reformed Dutch Church to labor among the emigrants from New York and New Jersey, who had formed a colony in that State. The subject was already under consideration, and as young Mr. Labagh possessed, in the judgment of the Synod, qualifications which peculiarly fitted him for the work, he was induced, after repeated and pressing solicitations, to undertake the mission. Among those who united in the effort to secure his services, none were more earnest than the Rev. John N. Abeel, D.D., one of the pastors of the Collegiate Church, whose amiable Christian character caused him to be frequently spoken of among his brethren as "the beloved disciple John," and whose memory is still cherished in the traditions of the time, and in the recollection of his surviving contemporaries. He died in 1812.

Having accepted the mission, Mr. Labagh went, by direction of Synod, to Dr. Livingston, who, al-

Digitized by Google

though he was one of the pastors of the Collegiate Church in New York city, as well as professor of theology, then resided at Bedford, Long Island, at present included within the limits of the city of Brooklyn. Knowing already something of Mr. Labagh's attainments, and the urgency of the demand for his services, Dr. Livingston took him through a short course of theology, and after furnishing him with the requisite certificate, which bears date at New York, July 7, 1796, sent him to the Classis of Hackensack to be examined with a view to licensure and ordination.

The certificate, as it contains a recital of a few circumstances peculiar to the case of Mr. Labagh, and a reference to churches newly organized, "*longeque ab his oris positis*," was probably somewhat different in form from the certificate usually given. It is here submitted to the learned reader *literatim et verbatim*, and for the satisfaction of those who do not understand the Latin, is accompanied with a translation:

"Lectoribus benevolis, presertim Ecclesiarum Americano-Belgicarum Classi Hackensackensi plurimum reverendæ, salus in Christo Domino sempiterna esto!

"Quum vir juvenis ornatissimus Dom. Petrus Labagh, S: S: Theol: studiosus, in procinctu stet, ut

Digitized by Google

examini venerandae Classis sistat, ad ambiendam libertatem concionandi Evangelii salutis, eam que ob rem publicum a me TESTIMONIUM petierit: Literis hisce sigillatis, pro officio, certum facio: memoratum hunce Juvenem scriptum mihi specimen exhibuisse de studiis suis theologicis, sub cura eruditissimi viri D: Solomonis Froeligh in Ecclesia Neo-Barbadana &c., antistitis reverendi, summa cum diligentia ac feliciter peractis. Attestor itidem, eum sese porro meae quoque institutioni commisisse, et per duarum mensium spatium, attenta mente summaque modestia studiis invigilasse, atque in plurimis privatis examinibus, haud pauca suorum progressuum signa mihi dedisse, ut spes sit illum favente Deo, idoneum fore ad fungendum munus ecclesiasticum cum fructu in regno mediatoris nostri Jesu Christi. QUOCIRCA hunc Juvenem plur: Rev'd: Classi commendatum velim. Supremum interim Numen supplex veneror velit quam multos suscitare, qui ex pio animi proposito, sacro sese muneri consecrant, totiusque vitæ tenore certissimam Ecclesiæ aedificationem pollicentur, eosque gratiae suae donis multifariis in dies instruere! Deum T. O. M. denique enixe precor, ut spiritus sui Numine magis magisque huic viro adesse, eumque Ecclesiis novissime formatis, longeque ab his oris positis, fidum prosperumque seruum constituere atque conservare velit, ac denique spem,

Digitized by Google

haud leviter de eo conceptam, ratam habeat, jubeatque.

"Dabam Neo-Eboraci ad diem 7, Julii, 1796.

"J. H. LIVINGSTON, [L. L. S.]

"S: Theol: Professor."

There is no friend of the Reformed Dutch Church, or of any Church of our blessed Lord, who will not feel disposed to join most heartily in the prayer of the venerable Professor, which he has, with so much unction, expressed above: "Supremum interim Numen supplex veneror velit quam multos suscitare, qui ex pio animi proposito, sacro sese muneri consecrant, totiusque vitae tenore certissimam Ecclesiae aedificationem pollicentur, eosque gratiae suae donis multifariis in dies instruere!"

The following is a translation of the certificate:

To the friendly readers, especially of the American Dutch Churches of the very reverend Classis of Hackensack, let there be salvation eternal in Christ the Lord!

FORASMUCH as the very accomplished young man, Master PETER LABAGH, a student of Sacred Theology, may now stand waiting, in a state of preparation, to the end that he may appear, to be examined by the venerable Classis for the desired license to preach the Gospel of salvation, and on this account may

Digitized by Google

have sought from me a public TESTIMONIAL: By these sealed letters I do therefore certify: that this young man, above mentioned, has exhibited to me written evidence concerning his theological studies, under the care of that very learned man, Master Solomon Froeligh, a reverend bishop of the Church in New Barbadoes,* etc., with the greatest diligence, and now happily completed. I, in like manner, testify that he afterwards committed himself to my instruction also, and through the space of two months, with attentive mind, and the utmost propriety of behavior, devoted himself to the prosecution of his studies, and in many private examinations gave me not a few proofs of their advances; so that there is reason to hope that, with the blessing of God, he will be well qualified to discharge the ecclesiastical function with fruitfulness in the kingdom of our Mediator Jesus Christ. WHEREFORE, I desire this young man to be commended to the very reverend Classis. In the meantime, as a suppliant, do I pray that the Supreme Divinity may please to raise up very many who, out of a pious intention of mind, shall consecrate themselves to the sacred office, and by the

* The village of Hackensack was situated in a township which then bore, as it does now, the name of New Barbadoes. Hence Dr. Froeligh is spoken of as "a reverend bishop of the Church in New Barbadoes."

Digitized by Google

quality of their whole lives shall give promise of the most certain edification of the Church, and also to furnish them daily with the various gifts of his grace! In a word, I earnestly beseech God, the best and mightiest Defender, that by the Divinity of his Spirit, he may please to be present to this young man more and more, and in the Churches lately formed, and located far from these shores, to establish and preserve him faithful, prosperous and long, and finally, that he may purpose and command to be fulfilled the hope not lightly entertained in regard to him.

Given at New York, on the 7th day of July, 1796.

J. H. Livingston,
Professor of Sacred Theology.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

GRATIFICATION WITH DR. LIVINGSTON'S METHOD OF TEACHING — LICENSURE AND ORDINATION — CERTIFICATE COMMENDING HIM TO THE PEOPLE IN KENTUCKY — INCIDENT: A CHRISTIAN MOTHER — OFFERS HIMSELF TO GO ON A MISSIONARY EXPLORING TOUR TO WESTERN NEW YORK — EFFORTS OF THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH TO PLANT THE GOSPEL AMONG THE ABORIGINES AND EARLY SETTLERS IN AMERICA — DIFFICULTIES — MEGAPOLENSIS — ELIOT — EXTRACT FROM COTTON MATHER — MR. LABAGH STARTS ON HIS EXPLORING TOUR — REFORMED DUTCH CHURCHES IN CANADA — LETTER OF REV. ROBERT MCDOWALL IN REGARD TO THEM — SOME ACCOUNT OF THEIR HISTORY.

MR. LABAGH was greatly pleased with Dr. Livingston's method of teaching, and frequently expressed, in subsequent years, the gratification it afforded him to have enjoyed the instructions of that eminent servant of Christ.* If, at the time, he could have had

* It will indicate the high sense entertained, not only in the Reformed Dutch Church, but also in other denominations, of Dr. Livingston's services, as a professor of theology, to state that the Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, in 1786, "earnestly recommended to young men who may have a view of entering into the

Digitized by Google

his own choice in regard to the matter, he would have remained with him longer, but as the Doctor thought there was no necessity for it, he acquiesced in his decision, and in a few days presented himself before the Classis of Hackensack, which held its meeting in the village of Hackensack, and which there examined and licensed him to preach the Gospel. On the twenty-first of the same month, just two weeks from the day on which he received his professorial certificate from Dr. Livingston, he was solemnly set apart at Tappan, New York, to the work of the Ministry, by a Committee of Ordination. The committee consisted of the Rev'ds. Solomon Froeligh, D.D., George G. Brinkerhoff, and Nicholas Lansing. As it was customary at that time for one minister, who was designated for the purpose, to conduct the entire service on such occasions, the prayers were offered, and the sermon and charge delivered, according to a previous appointment, by his former instructor, the Rev. Solomon Froeligh, D.D. As the certificate of the Committee of Ordination may be of interest to some of our readers, both on account of

holy ministry, to procure from their teachers proper testimonials of their acquaintance with human literature, and that they attend the lectures of the Rev. Dr. Livingston, Professor of Divinity in the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church at New York, at least one year."—*MSS. Records*, I., 44, *quoted in Dr. Forsyth's Life of Proudfit.*

Digitized by Google

its connection with Dr. Labagh, and its reference to the early enterprises of the Reformed Dutch Church in Kentucky, it is here given entire. It will be seen, in the direction at the head, that the call from Kentucky was addressed to the Classis of New Brunswick.

"To the people of Salt River, Mercer County, and State of Kentucky, who have addressed a Call for a Minister to the Reverend Classis of New Brunswick: and to all to whom these presents may come, *Greeting:*

"Be it known, that, in compliance with an appointment of the Particular Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, to whom the Call was presented by said Classis, the Rev. Peter Labagh was, on the 21st July, 1796, by a Committee of Ordination from the Classis of Hackensack, duly and legally ordained a Minister of the Gospel, in the Reformed Dutch Church, and as a Missionary to our brethren in Kentucky, after having passed through a course of trial before said Classis with eclat, and to the full satisfaction of all the members; by the same order the Call from Salt River was put into his hands. Mr. Labagh, having been chiefly educated within the bounds of the aforesaid Classis of Hackensack, is known to the generality of its members. He is a

Digitized by Google

young divine of good erudition, well versed in the doctrines of grace, of strict morality and exemplary piety, one who, we trust, has wholly devoted himself to God, in whose abilities the Particular Synod and the Classis confide, as calculated to preach the Gospel to our brethren in the distant region of Kentucky. That the Lord may prosper his way; that he may protect him from all harm on his journey, and bring him in safety to the people of his mission; that when actually engaged in the execution of his sacred office his labors may be abundantly blessed; that he may be a happy instrument of converting many to the Lord Jesus, and promoting the important interests of the Redeemer's kingdom; that he may be successful in gathering together our scattered brethren in that country, and building them up in our most holy faith, and by his faithful exertions "the wilderness and solitary places may be glad, that the desert may rejoice and blossom as the rose;" is the fervent and sincere prayer of the Committee of Ordination.

Solomon Froeligh, V. D. M., *Theol. Lector.*
George G. Brinkerhoff, V. D. M.
Nicholas Lansing, V. D. M.

"Given at Tappan, this 21st day of July, in the year of our Lord, 1796."

Digitized by Google

On communicating to his mother his intention to undertake the mission to Kentucky, she was quite overcome by her emotions, and for a while could give expression to them only in tears. Kentucky was at that time regarded as a far distant region, and the journey thither, which it was necessary for him to perform mainly on horseback, was attended with an amount of toil and exposure, which, with our present facilities of travel, we are scarcely able to appreciate. But she was a devoted child of God, as well as a devoted mother, and though it cost her a sacrifice to consent to his going, yet the sacrifice was willingly made for the sake of her Saviour, and for the welfare of those who were destitute of the means of grace. The Christian at length triumphed over the parent, and she said to him, "How often have I prayed for the extension of Christ's kingdom among men! And now if the Lord will take my own child to answer my prayer, what have I to say? I feel that I ought to consent. If you think it is your duty to go, Peter, go."

It was a noble reply, and worthy to be recorded as an example for thousands of pious parents in our Church, and throughout our land, who, while they pray, we cannot doubt sincerely, for the coming of Christ's kingdom, yet withhold their children from the ministerial and missionary service to which he so

Digitized by Google

loudly calls them both by his providence and his word.

In the meantime, however, between the date of his acceptance of the Kentucky mission, and that of his departure, Mr. Labagh offered himself to the Classis of Albany as an agent or missionary to go on an exploring tour to western New York, in company with the Rev. Mr. Sickles, afterwards Dr. Sickles, of Schenectady. It is to the honor of the Reformed Dutch Church, and it should be remembered only to enlarge her liberality, and arouse her Christian enterprise in the same blessed cause, that, as she was among the first, if not the very first, to engage in labors for the conversion of the Indians, so she was in the van of that movement whose object it was to extend the influence of a preached Gospel, and of the house of God, into our western Territories, and into the wilds of Canada, with the advancing tide of human life. Her efforts in behalf of the Indians were almost coëval with her cis-atlantic existence. A late writer, in tracing the history of the various ecclesiastical bodies which constitute the great Presbyterian family, takes occasion to mention in honorable terms the initial attempts of the Dutch pastor at Albany to bring the aborigines under the meliorating and saving power of divine truth. "In 1633," says he, "a clergyman was sent out from the Classis of

Digitized by Google

Amsterdam, by which body the Dutch Church was supplied with ministers until the year 1757, when independent judicatories were established. It is worthy of notice that the earliest recorded efforts to teach the Indians the religion of Jesus, were made by the Pastor of the Church at Fort Orange, now called Albany. In the year 1643, several years before the labors of Eliot in behalf of the Indians began, Dominie Megapolensis had interested himself in their behalf, and often had them among his hearers when preaching the Gospel, and had frequent opportunities of explaining to them the nature and elements of the Christian religion."*

With what measure of success these early efforts were attended, there are no records extant to inform us. They were put forth in the midst of great and peculiar difficulties, and their results, it would be reasonable to suppose, must have been proportionately small. The task of reforming and evangelizing a savage people that have become imbruted by ages of the deepesti gnorance and degradation, can ordinarily be accomplished only by the blessing of God upon faithful and persevering labors extended through a long series of years. The depraved habits and customs that have been handed down by tradition

* Sketches of the Presbyterian Church, by Rev. J. E. Rockwell. Presbyterian Board of Publication.

Digitized by Google

and example from one generation to another, demand for their overthrow the influence of time as well as of truth, and require that they who labor for the attainment of such results should let patience have her perfect work. But in addition to all the obstacles arising from the traditions and manners of the people, there was another hardly less formidable in their language, which is described to us as a barbarous jargon peculiarly difficult to master, and subject to grammatical laws. Of the labors of the apostolic Eliot, at a later day, none indicate more clearly the resolute spirit and indefatigable perseverance which distinguished him than his mastery of the language, and the fruits it produced in his Indian grammar, and his translation of the whole Bible into the Indian tongue.

Cotton Mather has recorded Eliot's difficulties and triumphs in this department of his missionary labor, in terms, which, if they are quaint, are no less striking and expressive.

"Behold," says he, "new difficulties to be surmounted by our indefatigable Eliot! He hires a native to teach him this exotic language, and, with a laborious care and skill, reduces it into a grammar, which afterwards he published. There is a letter or two in our alphabet which the Indians never had in theirs; but if their alphabet be short, I am sure the

Digitized by Google

words composed of it are long enough to tire the patience of any scholar in the world; they are *sesquipedalia verba*, of which their *linguo* is composed; one would think they had been growing ever since Babal unto the dimensions to which they are now extended. For instance, if my reader will count how many letters there are in this one word, *Nummatchekodtantamooonganunnonash*, when he has done, for his reward, I'll tell him it signifies no more in English than, *our lusts;* and if I were to translate *our loves*, it must be nothing shorter than *Noowomantammooonkanunonnash*. Or, to give my reader a longer word than either of these, *Kummogkodonattoottummooetiteaongannunnonash* is in English, *our question;* but I pray, sir, count the letters! Nor do we find in all this language the least affinity to, or derivation from any European speech that we are acquainted with. I know not what thoughts it will produce in my reader, when I inform him that once, finding that the *Daemons* in a possessed young woman understood the Latin, and Greek, and Hebrew languages, my curiosity led me to make trial of this Indian language, and the Daemons did seem as if they did not understand it. This tedious language our Eliot (the anagram of whose name was Toile), quickly became master of; having finished his grammar, at the close he writes: 'Prayers and pains

Digitized by Google

through faith in Christ Jesus will do any thing!'" *

The same spirit which actuated Megapolensis in his labors among the Indians at Fort Orange, led the Reformed Dutch Church at a subsequent period to put forth an effort, which, however feeble it may appear to us, was yet in some proportion to her ability and circumstances at the time, to spread and maintain the institutions of evangelical religion among the emigrants and pioneers of civilization in what where then the western wilds. It was in connection with the desire to effect this object that the expedition to western New York, already mentioned, was conceived and undertaken. Mr. Labagh, with his fellow explorer, set out on his journey in August, 1796, and after visiting a number of settlements in that region, and collecting the information desired, he returned to report the result, and arrived at Hackensack in the month of October following.

The results of the missionary labor thus early commenced and subsequently carried on in western New York, are seen at the present time in the Reformed Dutch Churches, which are there maintaining the doctrines, and striving in their sphere and measure to disseminate the influence of gospel Christianity. Whatever may have been the fruits of the missionary labor expended in Canada, they have

* Mather's Magnalia, vol. 1, p. 561.

Digitized by Google

inured to the increase of other denominations than our own. The Reformed Dutch Churches planted in that province, by the efforts of those who have now gone to their reward, have ceased to sustain any ecclesiastical relation to our Synods, and our knowledge of them is consequently very defective.

A letter addressed to the General Synod of 1806, by the Rev. Robert McDowall, who had then been about eight years engaged as a missionary in Canada, contains some interesting statements in regard to the history of the effort put forth by the Church, to extend over that moral desert the influence of the Gospel. The letter, as found in the Minutes of General Synod for the year 1806, is the following:

"To the Rev. Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, convened at Albany, June 3d, 1806:

"FATHERS AND BRETHREN: The subscriber begs leave to lay before you a statement of the state of religion in Upper Canada. In the year A. D., 1798, he was sent by the Rev. Classis of Albany, on a mission to that country, and formed several congregations. He found the inhabitants very desirous of having the Gospel preached to them. Soon after his return from the Mission, he received and accepted a call from three of those congregations, which he had organized, viz: Ernestown, Fredericsburgh and Adol-

Digitized by Google

phustown, on the north-west side of Lake Ontario. He found that the enemy had come in like a flood, and had disseminated principles which were subversive of the fundamentals both of religion and morals. These anti-christian principles being strenuously advocated, and the doctrines of salvation by grace being misrepresented, and then turned into ridicule from almost the very first settlement of the country, had a very bad effect upon the minds of many. Notwithstanding, he has reason to be thankful that the truths of the Gospel have gained the ascendancy over many, and some who were bitterly opposed to the doctrines of the Cross, have cordially embraced them, and in the judgment of charity, have felt their salutary influence on their souls.

"He has, however, great reason to lament that he cannot discharge his duty to the people among whom he is settled. He is alone. The country is extensive. Many and pressing are the invitations which he frequently receives from distant parts, to go and preach the Gospel to those who are destitute of it. He has several times gone to York, which is upward of two hundred miles from the place where he lives. It is a very pleasant town, and contains a large number of inhabitants. The country is settled about thirty-five miles towards the north from York, through which settlement he has traveled several

Digitized by Google

times and preached to the inhabitants, who were very desirous to hear the Gospel. They were then anxious to have a minister settled among them, and able to give him a decent support. There is also a very flourishing settlement at the west end of the bay of Quinte, about forty miles from the place where he resides. The inhabitants have been very desirous to have the Gospel, and are able to support it. But the enemy has lately made inroads among them. Elizabethtown, about seventy-five miles to the north-east from where he lives, has been a very respectable congregation, but they are now in despair of ever having the Gospel established among them. They have given a call to two ministers, but were disappointed in their expectations. The enemy has lately made great inroads among them.

"Formerly the subscriber used to travel through all this great extent of country, preaching often from six to nine times in a week. Consequently the congregations among which he is settled were greatly neglected, often being from three to six weeks without having the Gospel preached to them. His constitution is now much debilitated, owing to the abundance of his ministerial labors, and he is therefore unable to visit those places. They are continually growing less able to support the Gospel. The Baptists frequently send missionaries through that coun-

Digitized by Google

try; and missionaries from Connecticut have lately visited those parts. The truth is, unless they have immediate assistance, they will be rent into so many sects, that they will be unable to support a minister of any denomination. To me they look for assistance. I cannot give it to them. What shall I do?

"To you, Rev. Fathers and Brethren, I must look for assistance. And as I have, through Providence, come here just at this very time when you are assembled to consult the welfare of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth, I wish to lay before you the deplorable condition our country is in, with respect to religion. For, according to present appearances, all endeavors to establish the Gospel in those parts will be needless, unless we have immediate assistance. And if no assistance can be obtained from the Reformed Dutch Church, he considers himself under the necessity to advise them to make application to the Presbyterian Church for supplies.

"From your affectionate brother and fellow-laborer in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus,

"Robert McDowall."

Notwithstanding the earnestness of the appeal, and the importance of the labor required, the Synod had no choice in regard to its course of action. However great may have been the desire to send as-

Digitized by Google

sistance to the brethren in Canada, it was impossible to find the men to go and settle among them as permanent pastors. The Churches nearer by were already in a large measure without the full and regular service of the ministry, and to remove, from those which were supplied, the pastors whose labors were so greatly needed, would have been to take the Gospel from one portion of the Church in order to give it to another. As it was, the Synod did that which was next best. It did, in fact, all that it well could do. It sent, at intervals, by direct appointment, as well as through its agent, the Standing Committee on Missions, a succession of ministers to visit and preach, during stated periods, among the several Churches in Canada.

At its session in 1806, to which reference has already been made, the Synod appointed three missionaries, who had offered their services for that purpose, to visit Canada, and labor among the people for "the space of at least two months." They were to set out on their journey thither on the first of August. These missionaries were the Rev. Messrs. Christian Bork, of the Classis of New York, Peter D. Froeligh, of the Classis of Ulster, and Conrad Ten Eyck, of the Classis of Montgomery. Their pulpits were to be supplied during their absence by ministers designated by the Synod, and each missionary

Digitized by Google

was to receive as a compensation, including his expenses, the sum of fifteen dollars per week. They were directed to keep a regular journal of their labors and successes, and report to the Committee on Missions.

The missionaries performed their work, and in due time submitted their respective journals and reports to the Committee on Missions. That Committee, having full power, probably sent out additional missionaries during the interval between the triennial meetings of Synod in 1806 and in 1809, as it certainly did afterwards during the interval between the meetings in 1809 and 1812.

The whole subject came up again before the General Synod of 1809, when two missionaries were appointed by that body to labor in Canada during "the space of at least three months." The Rev. Messrs. Jacob Sickles and Henry Ostrander, having offered themselves for that service, were accepted and sent out on the same terms and under the same directions as their predecessors.

A brief statement of the results of their labors is contained in a report submitted by the temporary Committee on Missions to the General Synod of 1812, from which the following paragraphs are an extract:

"It appears that since the meeting of General Synod in 1809, four missionaries have been employed

Digitized by Google

by the (standing) Committee on Missions, viz: In 1809, the Rev. Jacob Sickles and the Rev. Henry Ostrander spent three months as missionaries in Upper Canada, during which time they preached eighty-one sermons, administered the Lord's Supper three times, received thirty persons into the communion of the Church, and baptized thirteen children.

"In 1810, the Rev. Messrs. Alexander Gunn and John Beattie were employed as missionaries for the province of Upper Canada. Rev. Mr. Gunn did not proceed on his mission on acccount of the *reported* state of health in the country through which he was to have passed. Rev. John Beattie spent eighteen weeks, as a missionary, on a tour round Lake Ontario. He preached fifty-three sermons, received on confession of faith, sixteen, and by certificate, two persons, into the communion of our Church, administered the ordinance of Baptism to nineteen persons, and organized a Church at York, in Upper Canada, which is now under the care of the Classis of Albany.

"It appears to be the opinion of our missionaries, that Upper Canada opens a wide field for useful labors. Whether it would be expedient to send missionaries to Canada under existing circumstances, must be left discretionary with the standing Committee of Missions, to whom this business is intrusted. Should it be considered as expedient, it appears to be

Digitized by Google

necessary that our missionaries should be employed for a longer term than heretofore. Great benefit would result from the settlement of a few faithful ministers in the congregations already organized, who might be usefully employed a part of the time as missionaries, for which service they might be paid from our missionary fund."

Efforts were made by the General Synods of 1816 and 1817 to carry on the missionary work in Canada, but without any marked results. In the last named year the Rev. Messrs. J. D. Schermerhorn and Jacob Van Vechten were appointed to visit that Province, and to labor for three months among the churches. The principal facts in the statement which they presented after their return, were incorporated into the report submitted by the temporary Committee on Missions to the General Synod of 1818.

The Committee state that they "beg leave to call the attention of Synod to the report of the Standing Committee of Missions, accompanied with documents.

"This report informs Synod that the Rev. Messrs. J. F. Schermerhorn and Jacob Van Vechten have fulfilled with fidelity and zeal their appointment as missionaries to Upper Canada, and for further information refers to an interesting account which those missionaries have rendered, of the progress and re-

Digitized by Google

sult of their mission in that country. This account, drawn up with much intelligence, your Committee have read with no small pleasure, and with a view to exhibit those parts of it which are most interesting to us, they direct the attention of Synod to the following extracts:

"There are in the Province of Upper Canada eleven Reformed Dutch Churches.* These Churches are situated as follows: In the townships of Matilda, Osnaburgh, and Williamsburgh, each, one congregation. These three Churches are at present under the care of a Burgher Minister, who expressed a friendly disposition toward the Reformed Dutch Church. Number of communicants, sixty. Religion in a low state. In the township of Ernestown, two congregations, and of Fredericksburgh, one. These three Churches are under the care of the Rev. Mr. McDowall,† who continues to labor with unwearied

*There seems to be a slight discrepancy in the statistics; for while we are told in the general statement, at the outset, that "there are in the Province of Upper Canada eleven Reformed Dutch Churches," we find but nine accounted for in the details which follow. It is probable that two of the number first mentioned were omitted through inadvertance.

†The report of the Standing Committee on Missions, as incorporated in the minutes of General Synod for 1818, contains a noticeable item in regard to the Rev. Mr. McDowall. The Committee state, "that in lieu of Scott's Bible, which the Committee were

Digitized by Google

zeal in his Master's service. In the township of Sophiasburgh, one congregation, which is vacant. The people here expressed a desire that a candidate should visit them. In the township of Sydney, one congregation in a destitute condition, and of York, one congregation, which is vacant. The people are anxious to have a missionary settled among them, and will be answerable for his support.

"From the above brief statement it appears to your Committee, that Upper Canada opens a wide field for missionary labors. That field, however, circumstances prevent us from cultivating in a manner that is desirable, and that would produce those benefits which we expect to derive from our very limited means. But while your Committee coincide in sentiment with the Standing Committee of Missions, 'that the Canada Missions are not productive of the good effects which ought to be the object of missionary labors,' they are convinced, that the attention of Synod ought not to be wholly withdrawn from that country, in which the desolate places are so numerous, and in which so many souls are crying, 'Come over and help us.' It appears to your Committee

directed by the General Synod to transmit to the Rev. Mr. McDowall, they have by particular request of Mr. McDowall, communicated by letter, supplied him with other Theological books, equal in price to Scott's Family Bible, amounting to $80 37½."

Digitized by Google

that, in consequence of the contemplated removal of the Rev. Cornelius Schermerhorn into Canada, and of the disposition which one or more ministers of the Presbyterian order have manifested to connect themselves with our Church, a Classis might be organized in that country. With a view to this important object, your Committee submit the following resolution:—

"*Resolved*, That the Particular Synod of Albany be directed to take the most speedy and effectual measures to organize a Classis in the Province of Upper Canada."

This report was adopted, but does not appear to have led to any practical result.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

Return from western New York — Sets out for Kentucky — Touching Incident at Caughnawaga — Detained at Pittsburg — Reaches his Place of Destination — Remains in Kentucky only Three Months — Returns to New Jersey — Invited to Settle at Shannock and Harlingen — Accepts a Call to Catskill and Oakhill — Marriage — Domestic History — Removal to Shannock and Harlingen — Installation — Inaugural Sermon — Elected a Trustee of Rutgers College — Inaugurates Correspondence by Delegates with the German Reformed Church — *Note:* Opinion in Regard to its Discontinuance in 1853 — Early Efforts in Behalf of the Bible Cause — One of the Founders of the Somerset County Bible Society — Account of its Organization.

After returning from his expedition to western New York, Mr. Labagh remained among his friends in the vicinity of Hackensack for about two weeks, when he set out on his journey to Kentucky. Traveling on horseback he passed through Caughnawaga, Pennsylvania, and found occasion to tarry a few days in the place. While there, a circumstance occurred which made a deep, and, there is reason to

Digitized by Google

believe, an enduring impression upon his mind. Away from friends and home, in a strange country and among strangers, he one day found a paper folded and lying among the clothing which his mother's own hand had arranged for him to use while on his journey. He took it up, and, on opening it, discovered in her well known writing, these words: "The Lord, the Lord God be better to you than ten mothers, and to me than ten sons!" He read them with tears, and then went and cast himself upon God, with all his heart, as his everlasting strength and portion. More than once, after he had passed the age of three score years and ten, did he mention this incident to the writer of this Memoir, and speak of the remarkable influence it exerted upon his mind. He found those words to be words of power. They went with him through life. Who can estimate their silent, invisible, but controlling energy in his soul?

From Caughnawaga he pursued his way to Pittsburg, where he was detained several weeks by the state of the river. An opportunity at length offered itself, and he proceeded down the Ohio, toward his place of destination, which he reached early in February, after a journey of about three months.

He did not remain long in Kentucky; probably not more than three months altogether. His services, while there, were highly appreciated by the

Digitized by Google

people, but there were circumstances over which he had no control, which induced him to return for a season to New Jersey. Having organized a Reformed Dutch Church in Mercer county, he turned his face homeward, and arrived at New York about the first of June, being just in time to submit a report of his proceedings to the Synod. It was his intention, when he left Kentucky, to spend a short time in New York and New Jersey in the arrangement of his personal affairs, and then return to his distant field of labor. So confident was he in this expectation, that when he started on his journey to the east, he left his books and other articles of property behind him. But a wise and merciful Providence, whose overruling power he always delighted to recognize, had appointed him to a different service, and now led him in a way that he knew not of.

An interval of several months occurred between the date of his return from Kentucky and that of his first regular settlement as a pastor. During that time he received, on more than one occasion, informal proposals from the united congregations of Shannock* and

* As this place will be several times referred to in the course of this Memoir, it may be desirable to remark that the orthography of the name is so different, as given by different persons, that a stranger would be at a loss to determine its identity. It is written diversely Shannick, Shannock, New Shannack, New Shannick, New

Digitized by Google

Harlingen, to become the colleague of their pastor, the Rev. William R. Smith, brother of the celebrated Samuel Stanhope Smith, D.D., LL.D., President of the College of New Jersey. These proposals, however, he declined, and went up the Hudson river, with the intention of spending the winter of 1797 and 1798 in studying with his brother at Kinderhook. Mr. Smith himself at length wrote to him, urging him once more to visit the churches of Shannock and Harlingen, with a view to a settlement as his colleague. But the letter came too late. He had already accepted a call to the united churches of Catskill and Oakhill, in Greene county, New York. He was married on the tenth of May, 1798, to Magdalen Van Alen, of Greenbush, Rensselaer county, New York, and entered at once upon his duties as a pastor.

He continued in his first settlement until 1809, a period of eleven years. During that time his domestic circle was thrice invaded by death. In the first and second instances, he was bereaved of his children, and in the third instance of his wife, who died in 1805. Some three years after, on the thir-

Shannock, Neshannic, Neshannack, to which might be added a number of other variations "too tedious to be mentioned." It is here invariably spoken of as *Shannock*, the orthography most common, and, at the same time, most convenient.

Digitized by Google

teenth of October, 1808, he was married a second time, to Maria Schoonmaker, daughter of Johannes Schoonmaker, of Rochester, Ulster county, New York.

In the early part of 1809 he received and accepted a call to the united churches of Shannock and Harlingen, in Somerset county, New Jersey, and in July of the same year removed to his new field of labor. Within its bounds he was destined by a merciful Providence to close his life, respected and beloved by the children and the children's children of those at whose invitation, half a century before, he accepted its important responsibilities.

Although he removed to New Jersey, and commenced the discharge of his ministerial duties in the month of July, his installation, as we learn from the records of the Harlingen Consistory, did not take place till the following October. The religious services on the occasion were conducted by the Rev. Peter Steddiford, of Readington. On the ensuing Sabbath, the 8th of October, 1809, Mr. Labagh delivered his inaugural discourse to the congregation at Harlingen, on the text in 2 Corinthians 4: 5, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

The following extract, embracing the conclusion of his sermon, is indicative of the kind and genial

Digitized by Google

spirit, and of the evangelical unction, which characterized him throughout the whole of his ministry:

"How solemn, how weighty, is the ministerial office! To preach Christ Jesus the Lord, to declare the whole counsel of God, to be instant in season and out of season! Well might even an apostle approach it with trembling, and say, Who is sufficient for these things?

"In taking upon me the charge of these congregations, I address myself first to you, my worthy and reverend colleague, and fellow laborer in this vineyard. For your exertions in effecting my settlement here, and for the candid expression of your wishes on that subject, I offer you my cordial thanks. This was a considerable inducement for me to accept the call of these congregations, inasmuch as it afforded a ground of hope that in affections, in counsels, and in exertions, we should be united. In this hope I trust we shall not be disappointed. This day I tender to you my sincere regard, and my willing coöperation in the Gospel of our Lord. While we unitedly bear on our shoulders the ark of God, may we walk in love, and may the God of love and peace be with us! Your advancing years, and your longer standing in the Church, give you the advantage of more general experience and riper judgment. In this advantage I shall be glad to share, and my more

Digitized by Google

youthful vigor, I trust, will be willing to execute what your mature mind may suggest. May the God whom we serve, bless our labors, and prosper His cause, and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, may we receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away!

"In the next place, I address myself to the Elders and Deacons of these congregations. On your affection, your advice, and your assistance, I shall place great reliance in executing the duties of my office. It will be my pleasure always to maintain a friendly understanding with you, for a house divided against itself cannot stand. Your watchfulness, and your zeal, must be united with the exertions of your ministers, and your hearts must be one with theirs, or there is no prospect of a blessing. Like Aaron and Hur, you must stay up their hands, when they are stretched out in prayer to God. In another respect, your office is also important. You are appointed to watch over our doctrine and walk. In the latter you will doubtless find many imperfections. While you receive us as the servants of God, and dispensers of the unsearchable riches of Christ, remember that we carry our treasures in earthen vessels. With yourselves we are subject to many infirmities. Cast the mantle of Christian charity over our failings, as we desire to do over yours. If my feet should stray,

Digitized by Google

let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head. I have this day bound myself to serve, in the Gospel of Christ, the Churches which you represent. Brethren, I ask your fervent supplications at the throne of grace, that I may be found a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, and that my coming unto you may be in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. I trust you will always find me acting toward you with a generous confidence. You are our advisers and helpers. You with us are accountable for the souls of these people. We shall, therefore, cheerfully coöperate with you in the work of the Lord, and may He, in whose vineyard we labor, bless our united exertions for His glory! May our reward be great in Heaven, and there, when we shall have ceased to serve our God on earth, may we unite with the four and twenty elders around the throne, and cast our crowns at the feet of the Lamb!

"In the last place, I shall address the congregation at large. My brethren, we feel a heavy responsibility when we behold so many souls committed to our care. On an occasion so solemn, we should be cautious in our promises to serve you in the Gospel, lest we essentially fail in their fulfillment. We are insufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

Digitized by Google

If we know our own hearts, our desire is to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. To be successful in winning souls to him is our highest ambition. We ask your friendship and your confidence. These are necessary between a minister and his people. And when these have once ceased to exist, the connection had better be dissolved. Expect not too much from us. Remember that your ministers are not angels. They are men of like passions with yourselves. They are frail and sinful creatures. Bear with their infirmities, and be not ready to expose their faults. To be respecters of persons, they dare not. Their ministrations must be free from partiality. When, therefore, they utter the reproofs of God's word for sin, receive the friendly act in the spirit of kindness, and consider their labors as labors of love.

"Finally, brethren, pray for us. We need your prayers. Remember the old proverb of the fatherland, 'A praying people make a preaching pastor.' We shall soon be discouraged in the work unless we are thus assisted and sustained. Your friendship and forbearance will cheer us in our duties, and your fervent prayers will encourage us to hope for success.

"The consequences of our present connection relate to the eternal world. Before the bar of God, ministers and people must soon appear. To escape the terrors of that day, may we be found faithful unto

Digitized by Google

death, and the salvation of your souls to the fruits of our labors!"

In the year 1811, two years after his removal to New Jersey, Mr. Labagh was chosen a member of the Board of Trustees of Queens, now Rutgers, College, then under the Presidency of the Rev. John H. Livingston, D.D. Mr. Labagh continued to hold the office until the time of his death. He was always a warm and efficient friend of the College, and very punctual in discharging the duties devolved upon him as a member of the Board.

In the year 1812, the General Synod being desirous of promoting a more intimate and friendly intercourse between the Reformed Dutch and the German Reformed Churches, appointed Mr. Labagh, in company with the Rev. James S. Cannon, to attend the meeting of the German Synod with proposals having reference to that result. In pursuance of their appointment, they proceeded, in May, 1813, to Fredericktown, Maryland, and presented to the German Synod there convened, the special object of their mission, by tendering to the members of that body the friendly regard of the Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, and by "offering to conduct the correspondence between the two churches upon a more agreeable and useful plan than the one hitherto pur-

Digitized by Google

sued, viz: by the appointment of corresponding members." The German Synod unanimously acceded to the proposal, and the correspondence thus inaugurated by the mutual appointment of delegates from one body to the other, continued until June, 1853, when the reported defection of the German Reformed Synod from the established symbols of that Church, and the introduction of theological novelties among them, led the Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church to put an end to the relation which had so long subsisted between them.*

In the organization of the Somerset county Bible Society, which occurred in 1816, Mr. Labagh also took an active part, and rendered important service.

* It is due to the truth of history to state, that, in regard to the occasion and expediency of the action taken by the General Synod of 1853, discontinuing the correspondence between the two churches, Dr. Labagh's judgment was never entirely convinced. That there was a tendency manifested by individuals in the German Reformed Church toward certain theories which gave countenance, in a greater or less degree, to Romish or Pantheistic notions, he did not suppose there was any reason to doubt. On this point, he shared the very general apprehension of the Evangelical Protestant ministry. But to what, precisely, that tendency amounted, whether it was fatal in character or universal in extent, and whether the German Reformed Church, as a whole, should be held responsible for it, were questions upon which he thought there was scarcely sufficient light to warrant, or at all events to require, the grave and important action of the Synod.

Digitized by Google

The impulse given to the work of circulating the sacred Scriptures, by the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in 1804, soon awakened on this side of the Atlantic a spirit of inquiry, and a disposition to establish institutions of a similar nature. The first association of the kind that was organized in the United States, was the Philadelphia Bible Society, which began its existence in 1808.* Others soon sprang up in different parts of the country, and among the earliest of them was the New Jersey Bible Society, at whose suggestion, through its President, the Hon. Elias Boudinot, the American Bible Society was formed in May, 1816. To this institution the New Jersey Society at once became auxiliary, and, at its meeting in August, 1816, "recommended to their several Boards of Agents, in the different counties of the state, to effect, wherever practicable, the formation of county societies." In conformity with this recommendation, a meeting of a considerable number of citizens of Somerset county, was held, as we find it stated in the printed record of the proceedings, "at Somerville, at the house of Daniel Sargeant, on the 1st day of October, 1816, to take into consideration the subject of forming a Bible Society in and for said county, as auxiliary to the New Jersey, or the American Bible Society." Of this meeting,

* See the American Bible Society Manual.

Digitized by Google

Peter B. Dumont was chosen chairman, and John Frelinghuysen, secretary; and, on motion of Samuel Bayard, a committee was appointed to draft a constitution. The committee consisted of seven persons: the Revds. Peter Steddiford, John Vredenbergh, Robert Finley, the founder of the American Colonization Society, and afterwards President of the University of Georgia, and Peter Labagh; and the laymen, J. M. Bayard, J. Frelinghuysen, and P. Elmendorf.

They accordingly prepared the constitution, and, at a public meeting, "held in the church at Somerville, (known in ecclesiastical records as the Reformed Dutch Church of Raritan), on Tuesday, the 10th day of December, 1816," it was submitted by the committee, and, "after sundry alterations made therein," was adopted by the meeting. The Somerset County Bible Society was thus organized for service; a service which it has ever rendered with an energy and munificence worthy of all praise; and among those who were chosen to constitute its first Board of Managers, we find the names of men who were as great in intellect and learning as they were in piety, whose efforts were as fruitful as they were earnest, and who, "being dead, yet speak," by their example and by their labors, to build up the kingdom of Christ. It would be unjust not to mention among

Digitized by Google

the founders of the Society, in addition to the name of Labagh, the names of Cannon, of Six-Mile-Run, Vredenbergh, of Somerville, Finley, of Baskingridge, Steddiford, of Readington, Hardenbergh, of Bedminster, Zabriskie, of Millstone, Boggs, of Boundbrook, and Comfort, of Kingston; together with the names of honored laymen, who, in their different spheres, contributed so largely to the success of the same noble cause, such as the two Bayards, Dumont, Schenck, Frelinghuysen, Stryker, Annin, Kirkpatrick, and Dubois.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

Official Labors — Rev. Elias Van Bunschooten — *Note:* Some account of him — He makes a donation and bequest to General Synod — After his death the Synod resolves to have his remains conveyed to New Brunswick, and his tomb designated by a monument — Mr. Labagh one of the Committee to carry the resolution into effect — Singular occurrence at the disinterment of Mr. Van Bunschooten's remains; the bones of the prophet restoring the dead to life — Sunday schools, their origin — First Sunday schools in the United States — First in Somerset County — Account of the schools at Harlingen — Mr. Labagh's influence in Synod — Proposed union of the Associate Reformed and the Reformed Dutch Churches — Mr. Labagh on the Committee to which the subject was referred by General Synod — Failure of the plan — Continuance of fraternal relations.

It frequently occurred during the early, as well as the subsequent part of his ministry at Shannock and Harlingen, that Mr. Labagh was appointed by the various judicatories of the Church to the discharge of duties, which, though they were not strictly ecclesiastical, required, in a large measure, the exercise of

Digitized by Google

sound judgment and executive ability. Among the labors of this kind devolved upon him there was one, which, though attended with no great difficulty, we cannot forbear to mention.

In the year 1814, the Rev. Elias Van Bunschooten,*

* Dominie Van Bunschooten was born at New Hackensack, Fishkill township, Dutchess county, New York, October 26, 1738. He graduated honorably at Nassau Hall, Princeton, New Jersey, October 5, 1768. He studied theology with Dr. Hermannus Meyer, at Kingston, New York. He was licensed in 1773; first settled as a pastor at Schagticoke, on the Hudson river, north of Troy; and, in July, 1785, removed to the Clove, in "the beautiful Kittitiny valley," in Sussex and Warren counties, New Jersey, where he ended his days, January 10, 1815. He was a lover of learning, and a man of thoroughly evangelical principles, but "his personal character had a strong tinge of eccentricity."

He lived and died a bachelor. From the three congregations to which he ministered in New Jersey, he received an annual salary of a little over one hundred pounds. By economy and care he so managed his income as to accumulate a considerable property. He became the owner of a tract of land of about seven hundred acres, and also erected a mill which was a great convenience to the settlers of what was then almost a wilderness, on the western borders of civilization.

A number of incidents illustrating the Dominie's eccentricity, were gathered up a few years ago, and embodied with many interesting statements in an article in the New Brunswick Review. It is from that publication that the facts here given have been chiefly derived. Among other traditions respecting him are the following:

"A deacon who collected his pittance at Minisink, defaulting in payment, mortgaged his farm to the Dominie as security. The

Digitized by Google

who about two years before had, in consequence of age and infirmity, retired from the pastoral charge of the Reformed Dutch Church at the Clove, (Dutch,

mortgage was foreclosed after he had ceased to minister in that place, and was given to the Church for a parsonage."

"The Dominie was once summoned across the Delaware to bless the bands of holy wedlock. On reaching the bridgeless stream, he found that a great freshet had rendered it wholly unfordable. In this emergency, the candidates for matrimony were forced to take their stand on the opposite bank, and to give ear to their nuptial benediction, almost drowned as it was by the hoarse roar of the rushing waters. In his record of marriages he had solemnized, he was wont to add to the names of the parties what he quaintly phrases the 'time of *execution!*'"

"His frugality sometimes displayed itself in the most whimsical forms. Among his other oddities was what might be called an ancestral exactness in all matters pertaining to property. Whether in paying or receiving money, he insisted upon 'the uttermost farthing,' remarking usually, that otherwise the account could never be balanced. He carried this so far that, in settling with a customer at his mill, and finding that he owed *three cents*, he would not be satisfied till he had gone to his house for the coppers. His neighbor in vain remonstrated against his troubling himself about such a trifle, and, being in haste, rode off without waiting for the insignificant instalment. The Dominie sent a negro in chase, who followed the fugitive creditor seven miles, and at last succeeded in making payment in full!"

"His sense of justice was so keen, that he could not bear the idea of unrequited labor; and during his last sickness, of three months' continuance, he insisted every morning on paying a day's wages in silver to each of the neighbors who had watched by his bed-side.

Digitized by Google

Kloof, signifying a valley opened or cloven by a stream) in Sussex county, New Jersey, made a donation to the Trustees of Queens, now Rutgers

However unwilling they might be to receive it, he would not be pacified till they had received their fee."

An incident which strikingly illustrates Dominie Van Bunschooten's eccentricity, and at the same time throws light upon the origin of the Van Bunschooten Fund, was related by the Rev. Dr. Benjamin C. Taylor, of Bergen, New Jersey, in a speech before the General Synod at its last session in Albany, in June, 1859. Dr. Taylor, at the solicitation of the writer, has kindly furnished his statement for publication:

"At the session of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, held in New York city in June, 1814, the Rev. John M. Bradford, D.D., being then President of the Synod, a venerable man appeared, dressed in antique costume, and on entering the Synod chamber, holding his round-crowned and broad-brimmed hat in his hand, walked calmly up the aisle to within a few feet of the President's seat, politely bowing, and said, 'Mr. President, I want to talk.' The President asked him, 'Are you a member of this Synod, sir?' 'No, sir,' was the reply, 'but I want to talk, sir.' The President said to him, 'None but members of this body can be permitted to speak here, sir.'

"It seemed that no one recognized the good old man, when just at that moment the Rev. Peter Labagh entered the house, and hearing the President's refusal to suffer the venerable man to speak, and having previously been invited to sit as an advisory member of the Synod, immediately said, 'Mr. President, I move that the Rev. Elias Van Bunschooten have leave to talk.' The question was put and carried.

"Forthwith the generous old man went up to the President's

Digitized by Google

College, amounting to $14,640, to be devoted to "the support and education, in the classical and theological studies, of pious youth, who hope they have a call of God to preach the Gospel of Jesus

desk and drew from his pocket a package containing bank bills, and began to count them. He continued until he said, 'Mr. President, there are eight hundred dollars.' He then took from his pocket another package containing certain obligations which he had prepared to the amount of thirteen thousand eight hundred and forty dollars. The Synod listened attentively as he followed up his powerful, practical talk, and stated the purposes of his gift to the Synod, and desired a committee of conference to be appointed to adjust appropriately the arrangements for carrying out his views in regard to the matter. The minutes of the Synod show the arrangements which were then made.

"Such was the ever-to-be-remembered Van Bunschooten Bequest, augmented by subsequent gifts of that father in Israel, specified in his last will and testament, and now amounting to over twenty-thousand dollars, the income of which has ever been appropriated as directed by the donor: 'for the support and education in the classical and theological studies of pious youth who hope they have a call of God to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.' This was at that day a great 'talk' indeed, a noble act, which laid broad foundations on which have been reared our College and Theological Seminary.

"The reverence with which the act was performed, the simplicity and dignity of it, and the joy consequent upon it, were not soon forgotten by the members of that General Synod, very nearly all of whom are now no more with us, but have passed to their reward in 'the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

Digitized by Google

Christ." This sum was afterwards, by a bequest contained in his last will and testament, increased to upwards of $17,000. In 1815 Mr. Van Bunschooten died, and his remains were interred in the burial ground of the church which he had served in the ministry. Two years after this, in 1817, the General Synod, to testify its gratitude for his munificent gift, and its respect for his memory, appointed a committee to superintend the removal of his remains to the cemetery of the Reformed Dutch Church of New Brunswick, and to procure the erection of a suitable monument to designate his grave. That committee consisted of the Rev. Professor John H. Livingston, D.D., the Rev. Peter Labagh, and the Rev. Charles

"Let the memory of this transaction be precious, and when the donor's request is complied with, that his bequest be read at the stated sessions of our Classes, Particular and General Synods, let it be borne in mind that this is to be done 'not for aggrandizement or self-ostentation, but to be an humble pattern for others to copy after: if the thing being so kept alive and considered, who knows whether God, in his good providence, would not move some to do the like?'"

This incident, originally related by Dr. John M. Bradford, President of the Synod, was afterwards fully authenticated by Dr. Labagh. It was also stated by Dr. Labagh, that the formal document signed by Mr. Van Bunschooten, and now known as the "Bequest," was drawn up by the Hon. Abraham Van Vechten, L.L.D., an elder from the Classis of Albany.

Digitized by Google

Hardenbergh, then pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church of Bedminster, New Jersey.

The duties of the committee were performed chiefly by Mr. Labagh. He proceeded to the Clove, and had the remains of the departed patriarch exhumed. While the workmen were in the act of disinterring them, an event occurred which imparted to the transaction a solemnity and consequence which were as salutary as they were unexpected. A crowd of persons, some of them members of the Church, others only attendants at its worship without being in its communion, were drawn together as spectators of the scene. Among them was an unconverted woman, of entire respectability, who had for years sat under the ministry of him whose remains were now about to be removed to another and a distant place of rest. She regarded the progress of the work with great interest. Her memory was awakened. The past, with its opportunities of mercy, which she had abused, and with the faithful teachings of her departed pastor, which she had disregarded, came back upon her mind with overwhelming power. As she saw the coffin lifted from the grave, she uttered a cry of anguish, and became almost helpless from the violence of her feelings. The truth which had been preached to her, years before, at length sprang up in life, like seed long buried, and yielded its appro-

Digitized by Google

priate fruits. It was nearly a year, however, before, "being justified by faith, she found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Labagh prosecuted his task, and in due time reported to the Synod that he had fully executed the duties devolved upon him.

About the year 1815, or 1816, the project of establishing Sunday schools for the special purpose of instructing the young in biblical and religious truth began to engage the serious attention and efforts of Mr. Labagh. It is not pretended, of course, that the idea originated with him. With whom it did originate, the writer is not able to say. It has often been stated, and quite generally supposed, that it had its origin in 1782, in the mind of Robert Raikes, Esq., of Gloucester, England. But this is, undoubtedly, a great mistake.

As early as the year 1527, schools for religious instruction, on the Lord's Day, were established in Germany through the instrumentality of Luther and Melancthon. We are informed by President Sears, of Brown University, that "there were regular Sunday schools then, (in 1527), as now, only the teachers were the same as on other days of the week. The pupils were, early on Lord's Day mornings, conducted to the church for the matins, as all such morning services were called. Next, they had a

Digitized by Google

lesson from the Bible, or the catechism in the school room. At eleven or twelve o'clock they attended on the principal service of the day. Sometimes, the younger classes remained at the school room, where they received religious instruction better adapted to their capacities than that given in the pulpit. The older pupils were carefully examined upon the sermons which they had heard. The order was varied in different schools, as well as the exercises themselves; but the above general statement is sufficiently accurate to illustrate the way in which the day was passed in the schools. From all this, it will appear that the nineteenth century has made less advance than is commonly supposed upon the sixteenth, in respect to the religious education of the young. In respect to books and organizations, there is a great difference; in respect to the thing itself, the object sought, the comparison would not be discreditable to the Reformer."*

Similar schools were organized at a later day, though at least twenty years prior to those of Robert Raikes, by Stouber, the predecessor of Oberlin, as pastor of the Ban de la Roche, (District of the Rock), or, as the Germans called it, the Stein-thal, (Stone Dale), in the north-east of France. He established a regular system of instruction for adults during a

* Life of Luther, chap. v. sec. iii.

Digitized by Google

part of the Sabbath, and the good work which he thus commenced, Oberlin, who succeeded him in 1767, carried forward on a larger scale, and with great success. While Oberlin was pastor, there were in the district not only Sunday schools, but also infant schools, which it has been supposed, were the first ever known.*

The first permanent Sunday school organization in the United States was established in Philadelphia, in January, 1791. The teachers employed by it were paid for their services. The institution ceased to be operative in 1819. The New York Sunday School Union began its existence in February, 1816, and was followed by the Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union, in May, 1817. In accordance with a suggestion from the Society in New York, the two were united in May, 1824, under the title of the American Sunday School Union. That organization, which is still prosecuting with vigor and success its labors of love in behalf of the children, has indeed proved a fountain "the streams whereof have made glad the city of God."

The subject of Sunday school instruction began to awaken a practical interest in Somerset county about the same time that it did in Philadelphia and New York. The earliest schools that were organized in

* Life of Oberlin, chapters i. and v.

Digitized by Google

the county were probably those of Somerville and Harlingen; but to which of the two the priority ought to be assigned, it is not easy to determine. It is not unlikely that their origin was very nearly cotemporaneous. The school at Somerville was established about the year 1816 or 1817, by Mrs. John S. Vredenbergh,* wife of the pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church of Raritan, and Mrs. Andrew Howell, and was known by the name of the Charity school. Up to 1832 it continued under the care of the female association to which it owed its origin, and during a

* Mrs. Vredenbergh was the daughter of the Rev. James Caldwell of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, who, with his wife, was murdered, by the British, during the war of the Revolution, and the mother of Mrs. Elizabeth Vredenbergh Freeman, who, with her husband, and six other American missionaries, and two children, was also murdered by the sepoys, at Cawnpore, India, during the great rebellion. Mrs. Vredenbergh's father and mother were martyrs to the cause of American Independence, and her son-in-law and daughter were martyrs to the still nobler cause of Christ. It is a singular fact that they all fell by the same instrument of death. Mrs Caldwell was shot through the window of a room to which she had retired with her children for safety and prayer, June 25, 1780, and Mr. Caldwell was shot while walking from the landing at Elizabethtown Point, November 24, 1781. Mr. and Mrs. Freeman, in company with their fellow missionaries, were marched out to the parade ground at Cawnpore, at seven o'clock, on the morning of June 13, 1857, and deliberately shot down in cold blood by a detachment of sepoy soldiers.

Digitized by Google

part of that time, at least, the teachers were paid for the instruction which they there gave to the children of the poor.

The schools established in the Harlingen congregation were the fruits of Mr. Labagh's personal exertions. The first one, probably, was organized in the spring of 1817. Strange as it may appear at the present day, there was so much opposition to the proposed plan of gathering the young into a school for religious instruction on the Sabbath, that the majority even of church members would not allow their children to attend. Notwithstanding the objections that were offered, the number of scholars during the first season was large, but composed principally of colored people of all ages, many of whom came a great distance that they might learn to read the word of God. The school was held in the church for about a year, when complaints began to be made that the hymn books were injured by the scholars. It was then deemed advisable to withdraw to the school house, which was accordingly done. It was not quite so easy, however, to escape the spirit of opposition. It followed them; and soon it was alleged that the school books were soiled and thrown about in disorder; whereupon, a certain trustee of the school district, who "feared not God, neither regarded man," locked the door of the school house,

Digitized by Google

and left the Sunday school to find accommodations as best it might. The week before this occurrence took place, there had been a celebration of the Fourth of July at Harlingen, in the grove near the church. Arbors had been erected, and seats placed in them, for the use of those who attended the celebration. To these the teachers now resorted with their scholars, and, in their cooling shade, spent the usual time in imparting the knowledge of those things which pertain to the kingdom of heaven. The exclusion from the school house was an act of malice, which, though intended for evil, resulted in good. It rendered it necessary at length for the Sunday school to apply to the Consistory, the only other available resort, for permission to occupy their room, which was at once and very cordially granted. A permanent place was thus secured in which the school ever after continued to meet without fear of molestation.

After the organization of the school at the church, which was the central point of the congregation, others were successively established on the outskirts, at Griggstown, in the northern district, and at Plainville. But they all suffered, in a greater or less degree, from the same spirit of opposition which had been evoked at Harlingen. Many good men, who were in comfortable circumstances and highly respectable, looking upon the schools as institutions of

Digitized by Google

mere charity, would not give their children permission to attend. Time and the utility of the enterprise, however, at length conquered their prejudices, and the Sunday schools became triumphant.

For a number of years they were, for the most part, supplied with superintendents by the students in the Theological Seminary at Princeton. The course of instruction was simple, though well adapted to the purpose for which the schools were established. The smaller children were taught the elements of reading, those farther advanced were drilled in the catechism, and all, who were of competent age and ability, had portions of Scripture assigned them, to be committed to memory during the week. Whatever may be said of Sunday schools as they are now conducted, with their superior facilities in the way of union questions and books of reference, one thing is certain, that the amount of pure and simple Scripture, now imbedded in the minds of the scholars, is not so great as it was when whole chapters were recited in succession, word for word. There were instances in which the scholars repeated from memory the whole of the four Gospels. The libraries were, of course, very limited. Their extent may easily be estimated from the fact that on the Sabbath the superintendent, or one of the teachers, usually carried them to the school in a small basket.

Digitized by Google

In the year 1832, a short time after the great revival, of which an account will be given hereafter, it was thought best to reörganize the schools, and conduct them on a somewhat different plan. It was felt to be desirable that the working force of the Church should be called into more earnest action. In compliance with Mr. Labagh's suggestion, superintendents were selected from the congregation, a board of managers was chosen in each of the districts, and a concert of prayer for Sunday schools was appointed to be held on the second Monday of each month. The influence of the revival upon the general interests and efficiency of the schools was most cheering. The Spirit of God had accomplished in a day what all the arguments and persuasions of years had failed to effect. The opposition fell dead, as if struck by the lightning of heaven, and the people with one mind buried it in a grave so deep that the hand of resurrection has never since been able to find it. It was a burial that brought no tears to the eye, unless they were tears of joy, and caused no mourners to go about the streets. It was the opening of a bright and glorious day. The Holy Ghost touched the hearts of the people, and the objections which till then appeared so formidable and vast, disappeared, like the specters of a troubled dream when one awaketh. The Sunday school put on a new aspect.

Digitized by Google

The parents suddenly lost their scruples about allowing their children to attend. The scholars came in crowds. The ranks of the teachers were filled. Young men and maidens, and even the veteran, gray haired disciple, who had been educated in the habits of a generation gone by, were not only willing, but anxious to come into the schools, and assume the responsibility of there instructing the young in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who had been the strongest opponents of the Sunday school, were now its most ardent and steadfast friends. It was a long struggle, but the scale of victory turned at last to the side of truth. So, does God assure us in his word, it shall ever be.

Mr. Labagh was often a member of the General Synod, and always a useful member. He frequently bore a prominent and decisive part in the deliberations of that body, and rarely failed to impress his brethren, whether in general debate or in the more retired discussions of the committee room, with his prompt sagacity and sound judgment in disposing of the business before them. The high estimate put upon his counsels will be readily inferred from the fact that he was frequently called to serve on the more important committees of the Synod.

It was to him, in connection with Drs. Gosman and Sickles, assisted by two worthy laymen, that the

Digitized by Google

General Synod of 1820 referred, for the purpose of inquiry and consideration, the report of the "committee appointed by Synod to confer with a committee of the Associate Reformed Church, on the subject of a union of the two Churches."

For a number of years this question of union had engaged the attention of leading men in both denominations. As early as 1802 the Rev. Ebenezer Dickey had written to Dr. Mason, from Philadelphia, suggesting as a matter for consideration the propriety of a union between the Associate Reformed Synod and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The disposition to draw more closely the bonds of Christian fellowship, among the several ecclesiastical bodies that were formed on the principles of Presbyterian order, gradually increased in strength until, in 1816, Dr. Mason, who was ever distinguished for his large and catholic spirit, offered, in the General Assembly of the Associate Reformed Church, a resolution, which was seconded by Dr. Alexander Proudfit, that commissioners be appointed on the part of that Synod to meet with commissioners to be appointed on the part of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, if it should be agreeable to that body, "for the purpose of considering whether any, and if any, what measures may be adopted for extending the good understanding happily sub-

Digitized by Google

sisting between the two Churches; and for combining their efforts in some efficient coöperation for promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom; and that the said commissioners report their proceedings in the premises to this Synod at its next meeting."

The resolution was unanimously carried, and commissioners were accordingly appointed, consisting of Dr. John M. Mason, Dr. Alexander Proudfit, and the Rev. Ebenezer Dickey, with the ruling elders, Joseph Nourse and Ebenezer Clark.

A communication to the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, drawn up by Dr. Mason, was also adopted, and ordered to be transmitted to that reverend body. It is as follows:

"To the Reverend Praeses and members of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church; the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church wish grace, mercy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ:

"Reverend and beloved Brethren: In considering the signs of the times, and their aspect towards the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, we have been forcibly impressed, not only with the desirableness, but also with the necessity, of a public coöperation, in counsel and action, by those Churches whose relative circumstances render it practicable. And we

Digitized by Google

have thought that with the good hand of our God upon us, it may perhaps be effected between your Churches and ours with mutual benefit, and to the glory of His blessed name. We are, and always have been one, in the doctrine which is according to godliness. Our fathers, in those searching times when the faithful were called to endure, for the elect's sake, bonds and imprisonment, and even to the testimony of their blood, were hearty and generous supporters of each other. Their descendants, to this hour, have obtained mercy to abide in the old paths, the good way wherein they walked, and found rest to their souls. We have ourselves lived in harmony; our intercourse unimbittered with collision and strife; and have been enabled, in a comfortable degree, to exemplify that divine declaration, Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Our Churches have enjoyed hitherto the singular favor of exemption from the contamination of false doctrine. These things, added to the loud call of God our Saviour to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, have turned our regards in an especial manner to you, and have excited a hope that such an understanding and concurrence may be produced, as shall redound to the greater advancement of His grace and truth.

"In order to ascertain this point, we have judged

Digitized by Google

it to be our duty, reverend and honored, to propose an appointment of commissioners from our two General Synods, to meet and consult on this interesting subject; and we do most respectfully and affectionately crave your agreement thereto. In which case we have chosen our reverend and respected brethren, Mr. Ebenezer Dickey, Dr. Alexander Proudfit, and Dr. John M. Mason, *Ministers;* together with Mr. Joseph Nourse and Mr. Ebenezer Clark, *Ruling Elders*, as commissioners on our part, to meet with such commissioners as you may be pleased to appoint, in the city of New York, on Thursday, the thirteenth day of June next; which will further appear by extracts from our minutes herewith transmitted.

"Reverend and honored: Our hearts' desire and prayer is, that our heavenly Father may continue among you, in its purity and power, that holy truth of His which has been your inheritance for ages, that He would bless you and keep you, that He would lift up His countenance upon you, and give you abundance of peace; and that He would so direct our counsels, and influence our hearts, as that we may rejoice together in a holy concert, as fellow-workers with Him.

"In the name and by the authority of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church."

Digitized by Google

The General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church received this communication with the most cordial sentiments of Christian affection, and, in compliance with its suggestions, appointed commissioners for the purpose designated, consisting of Drs. John H. Livingston, Solomon Froeligh, and James S. Cannon, with the elders Henry Rutgers and James Striker.

These commissioners met in the city of New York on the fourteenth day of June, 1816, and were organized for the transaction of business by the election of Dr. Livingston as president, and Dr. Mason as secretary. After mature consideration they adopted the following articles, to be submitted to their respective Synods:

"1. The Reformed Dutch Church and the Associate Reformed Church, being bound by the strongest ties of fidelity to the truth as it is in Jesus, summarily exhibited in their respective Confessions of Faith, do hereby most distinctly recognize the obligation to maintain that truth so exhibited; and do pledge themselves to each other, as brethren in the Lord, not to allow any doctrine subversive thereof, or contrary thereto, to be preached in any of their congregations, and to give each other every aid and assistance in their power, in this good and holy work.

"2. The two Churches agree to receive their respective ministers, candidates for the ministry, and

Digitized by Google

private members, to free and full communion, as the Lord shall offer opportunity; allowing their ministers and candidates for the ministry to preach, when properly invited, in their congregations settled or vacant, and admitting them, as well as the private members of the two Churches, to sacramental fellowship. But in order to prevent imposition and irregularity, they further agree to inform each other of the manner in which ministers, probationers, and private members, are accredited; and to furnish and accept credentials and certificates, which shall correspond with the forms to be respectively communicated.

"3. The two Churches shall not interfere directly or indirectly with their government or order respectively, but will strengthen each other's hands by discountenancing and refusing all applications which may be made to them by ministers, probationers, or private members from either, unless regularly accredited by the other, according to the tenor of the preceding article.

"4. Vacancies shall be at liberty to call ministers from either of the Churches according to the order established in that Church from which he may be called; he conforming himself to the order of the Church to which he may be called. And in case of a congregation being formed of people from both, it shall be at liberty to put itself under the care of either at its option.

Digitized by Google

"5. The General Synods of the two Churches shall form and maintain a regular and constant correspondence with each other, by the mission of two ministers and two elders from each to the other; who shall be affectionately received, and always honored, respectively as members enjoying a right to deliberate and advise upon every question, but not to vote upon any.

"The Convention have also had under consideration the subject of the theological education of the ministry of the two Churches. But considering the magnitude of the questions which it involves, they would merely present it to the view of the two Churches, as of an interest sufficient to command their most serious regard, with a view to such measures as, after the most mature reflection, may be found best calculated to promote the common benefit.

"All which is respectfully submitted to the General Synods of the Reformed Dutch, and the Associate Reformed Churches, respectively.

"Done at New York, June 14, 1816."

This document was signed by J. H. Livingston, Solomon Froeligh, Jas. S. Cannon, Henry Rutgers, James Striker, J. M. Mason, Alex'r Proudfit, Eben'r Dickey, Joseph Nourse, and Ebenezer Clark.*

* See Memoirs of John M. Mason, D.D., by his son-in-law, Dr. Van Vechten, of Albany, and Minutes of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church.

Digitized by Google

The attempt thus made to bring the two Churches into a closer relation, was followed, in 1820, by a further effort in the same direction. The object in view in 1816, appears to have been the establishment of a fraternal correspondence, by the mutual attendance of delegates from one Synod at the sessions of the other. The object in 1820, extending beyond this, seems to have comprehended the actual union of the two denominations, and their consolidation into one. At the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, held in June, 1820, a communication was received from the Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, proposing a union, and, to that end, the appointment of a committee of conference, to meet a similar committee from the Associate Reformed Synod, for the purpose of deliberating and deciding upon the terms upon which such union might be effected. The committee was accordingly appointed, and the conference took place in the city of New York, on the 20th of June, 1820. At the session of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, in October following, the committee appointed by that body reported that the united committees from the two Synods had, in their conference on the twentieth of June, agreed upon the terms of union, which they then submitted for the action of Synod. The plan adopted

Digitized by Google

for the consolidation of the two bodies was the following:

"1. The two Churches to be united under the style and title of 'The Reformed Protestant Church in North America.'

"2. The Confessions of Faith and Catechisms are acknowledged to be equally pure, and may either of them be used by Churches or individuals, at option.

"3. The government of the Church shall be administered by Consistories, Classes and Synods.

"4. The worship of the Church shall be conducted in the order heretofore in use in either of the Churches, at the option of the congregation.

"5. The old version of the Psalms, commonly called the Scots Version, or the Psalms and Hymns authorized in the Dutch Church, shall be used according to the preference of each particular congregation.

"6. The usages and customs of the Churches shall be left free, and not be meddled with in any thing which does not clash with general edification.

"7. The Theological Seminaries of the two Churches ought to be consolidated.

"8. A committee from each General Synod shall be appointed to prepare from the different books of government and discipline of the two Churches, a system for their common regulation; care being ta-

Digitized by Google

ken to admit as few alterations as may be compatible with their actual circumstances."

This document was signed by J. M. Bradford, Paschal N. Strong, John H. Livingston, Henry Rutgers, and Cornelius Heyer, from the Reformed Dutch Church; and by John M. Mason, Robert B. E. McLeod, Peter McCartee and Silas E. Weir, from the Associate Reformed Church.

The whole subject was referred by General Synod to a committee, of which, as we have already seen, Mr. Labagh was a member. The committee, during the same session, submitted their report, which is expressed in the following terms:

"The committee to whom was referred the proposals of a union between the Associate Reformed Church and the Reformed Dutch Church, as adopted by the commissioners appointed by the respective Synods, beg leave to report,

"That they have considered the subject referred to them, and view it as a measure intimately connected with the peace and future prosperity of the Church. Whatever has a tendency to unite the efforts of the Church of God, glorifies the Redeemer, and is therefore an object of great importance.

"As to the advantages which may result from the proposed union, from the consideration that there is a cordial agreement in the doctrines of the Gospel of

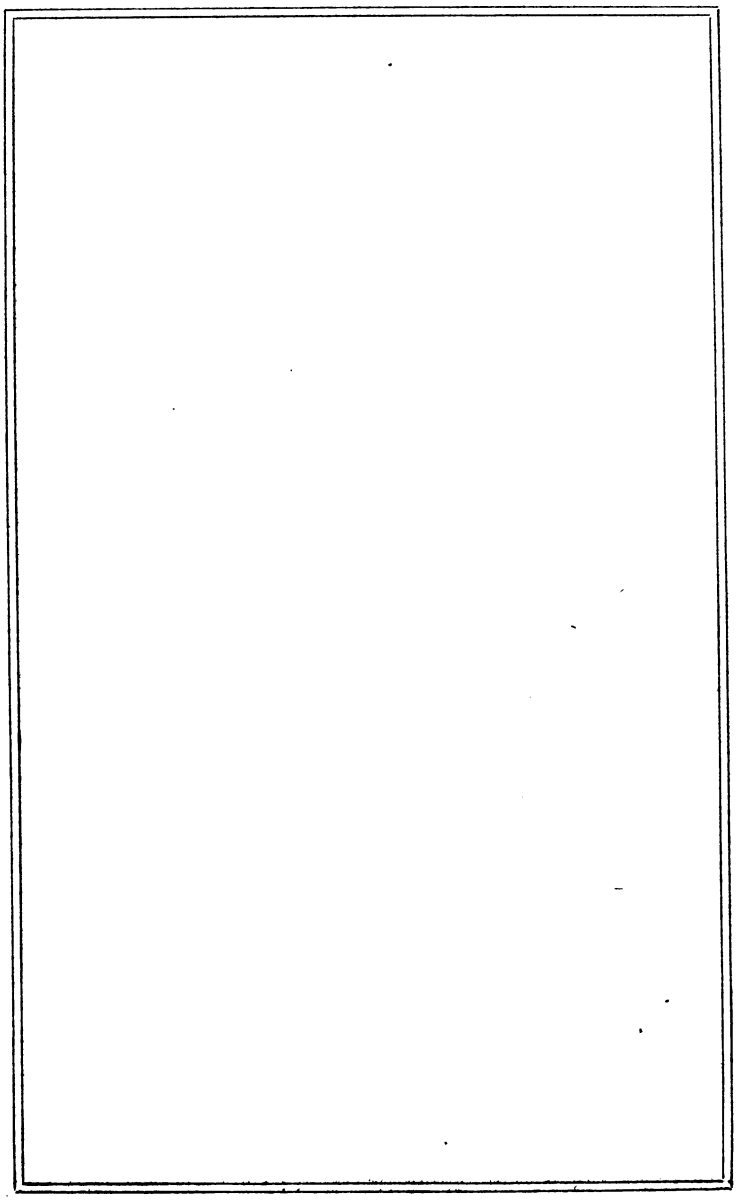
Digitized by Google

Christ, and a disposition has been evinced to yield minor differences, and that by combining the resources of the two denominations, additional means might be furnished for the extension of our boundary, and thus a weight given us in the Christian Church, which, in a detached state, we do not possess; however important in a decision on the terms of union, your committee do not deem it proper to express an opinion: viewing it as a matter of deep interest to the Churches, they submit to Synod the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the terms of union as agreed upon between the commissioners of the Reformed Dutch Church and the Associate Reformed Church, be transmitted to the Classes under the jurisdiction of this Synod, for their consideration and approbation, and that they report to the next ordinary meeting of the General Synod."

To the success of the movement thus inaugurated, in the most fraternal and catholic spirit, and with a view to a more efficient coöperation in promoting the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, there were obstacles which could not well be surmounted. The effort failed, and although the union never took place, the two Churches continued, as they had done before, to regard each other with the sincerest sentiments of Christian sympathy and affection.

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

Death of Mr. Labagh's Colleague, the Rev. William R. Smith — Funeral — Sermon by Mr. Labagh — *Note:* Additional Statements in regard to Mr. Smith — Dissolution of the Collegiate Relation between the Churches of Shannock and Harlingen — Mr. Labagh accepts a Call to Harlingen — Farewell Sermon at Shannock — Modern Improvements.

The relation which Mr. Labagh had sustained, for nearly eleven years, to his venerable colleague, the Rev. William R. Smith, in the pastorate of the two Churches of Shannock and Harlingen, was terminated by the death of the latter in the early part of 1820. For five years previous to his decease, Mr. Smith had been disqualified, by paralysis, for the performance of his accustomed ministerial duties. The service of the Churches, during this protracted illness, rested solely upon Mr. Labagh, and required from him an amount of care and labor which a constitution less hardy could scarcely have been able to endure. On the 23d of February, 1820, the trials

Digitized by Google

and sufferings of the aged servant of Christ were mercifully brought to an end, and his spirit was dismissed, we cannot doubt, from the scene of his earthly toils to the rest and fellowship of the Church triumphant in heaven.. Three days after, on the 26th of February, his funeral, as we learn from the minutes of the Harlingen Consistory, was "attended by a vast concourse of people anxious to testify their esteem for a faithful shepherd." The services of the occasion were chiefly conducted by Mr. Labagh, who preached a remarkably appropriate and impressive sermon on the text in 2 Timothy, 4: 7, 8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

The principal points of his discourse were, 1. A review of the apostle's life with reference to the varied experiences of a gospel minister; and 2. The prospect to which the apostle looked forward, and to which the faithful minister may now look forward, in the world to come. In the conclusion, he gave an interesting sketch of the life and labors of his colleague, which, as a part of the ecclesiastical history of the times, is entitled to more than a mere passing

Digitized by Google

notice. In bringing his funeral discourse to a close Mr. Labagh spoke as follows:

"Such, my brethren, are the comforts, and such the prospects that result from a life devoted to the service of God. When Paul looked back, he could say, My labors have been arduous, and my sufferings great; but when he looked forward, he could add with confidence, My rest shall be glorious in the mansions above. Never, my brethren, has a dying saint regretted the service he has done for Christ, nor the sufferings he has endured for His cause. Painful, arduous and perplexing may have been his duties and his trials, but the Lord was his strength, and his reward was sure. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

"You have before you the mortal part of that servant of God who has been your faithful pastor for many years. The connection is now dissolved. His work is done. The Master has called him home. He cheerfully obeyed the summons, and is gone to render an account of his ministry, and to receive his crown. Before we commit his body to the dust, let us pause for a few moments, and learn the lessons of spiritual wisdom which his life and character are so well adapted to impart.

Digitized by Google

"He was descended from a respectable and pious parentage.* His father was an eminent minister in the Presbyterian Church, active, laborious, and use-

*The Rev. William Richmond Smith was the second son of the Rev. Robert Smith, D.D., of Pequea, Pennsylvania. His mother was a sister of the celebrated brothers Samuel and John Blair, of the former of whom President Davies was accustomed to say, after his return from Europe, that although "he had heard many of the most celebrated preachers of England and Scotland, he had heard no one who in his judgment was superior to his former teacher, the Rev. Samuel Blair." The latter, the Rev. John Blair, was sometime Professor of Theology, and Vice President of the College of New Jersey. He discharged the duties of President during the interregnum between the death of Dr. Finley and the arrival of Dr. Witherspoon. After the latter had entered upon the labors of his office, Mr. Blair resigned his position, and returned to the work of the ministry as pastor of the Church at Wallkill, Orange county, New York, where he died December 8, 1771, in the fifty-second year of his age. A son of the Rev. John Blair, who was also a cousin of the Rev. William R. Smith, after completing his education at Princeton, removed to Kentucky, and engaged in the profession of the law. He was the father of Francis Preston Blair, Sr., distinguished as the editor for many years of the Washington Globe, and the grandfather of Francis P. Blair, Jr., the first Republican representative in Congress (the thirty-fifth), from Missouri.

The Rev. William R. Smith had two brothers who were both distinguished. The one was the Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, D.D., LL.D., the first President of Hampden Sydney College in Virginia, and afterwards the immediate successor of Dr. Witherspoon as President of the College of New Jersey. The other was the Rev. John Blair Smith, D.D., the second President of Hampden Sydney College,

Digitized by Google

ful. Many of his associates still living cherish his memory with profound respect. Your deceased Pastor was born in the State of Pennsylvania, May 10th, 1752. He was the second son of his father, and appears to have inherited a considerable portion of his father's laborious and persevering spirit. He early decided to follow the parental example, and to devote himself to the work of the gospel ministry. He passed through his course of preparatory education at the College of New Jersey, and after completing his theological studies under the direction of that eminent man, the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, who then presided over that institution, he was licensed to preach the Gospel, in the year 1780, and soon after received two calls from vacant congregations, each soliciting him to become their minister in the services of the sanctuary. After due deliberation he accepted the call from Wilmington, in the state of Delaware. In this congregation he labored for fifteen years, beloved, respected, and useful. During this period his Master called him to

and subsequently the first President of Union College at Schenectady, New York. Of the Rev. William R. Smith himself, it is remarked by the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, in his "Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College," that he "was a pious, judicious minister, less distinguished than either of his brothers; but his good old father was wont to say, that though William was inferior to his brothers in learning and eloquence, yet to comfort and edify the plain Christian, he was equal to either of them."

Digitized by Google

severe trials. Twice did he mourn under painful bereavements. Twice were the successive companions of his bosom removed by death, and he himself summoned to manifest in the season of sorrow the influence upon his own heart and life of that Gospel which he had preached to others.

"During his labors and trials at Wilmington his health became greatly impaired. He was seized with a violent influenza prevailing at that time and place, which for a season suspended his ministerial labors, and from the effects of which he never entirely recovered. Yielding to the advice of his physicians, he sought relief in a voyage across the Atlantic. He landed in Ireland, the native country and home of his ancestors, visited the principal cities in England, and returned to his charge in less than a year. With health not confirmed he again engaged with his natural perseverance, and with spirit unbroken, in the various duties of his calling. Having continued his labors for some time, he was led to believe that the damp and vaporous atmosphere of that place was but ill-adapted to his constitution in its enfeebled condition. He therefore sought another situation more congenial to his system, where he might continue his labors with less interruption. The providence of God directed him to this place, and upon receiving a call from the united congregations of Harlingen and

Digitized by Google

Shannock, he accepted the charge, and entered into your service in the year 1796.

"A short time before his settlement among you, the Lord healed the breach he had made in his family, and gave him a companion who is now left with six children to mourn his loss. Her tenderness to her dear departed husband, her unremitted care, her constant and affectionate attention, her watchfulness over him at home and abroad, by day and by night, her tender concern for his comfort and ease during his tedious illness, will, we trust, be affectionately remembered by you, and abundantly rewarded by his Lord and Master.

"For twenty-four years he has been your minister. The manner of his going in and out before you, is known to you all. While it was possible for him to preach he could not decline. He determined to spend and be spent in your service. Often have you seen him, with a feeble frame, scarcely able to stand, affectionately addressing you from this place. You admired his zeal while you lamented his bodily infirmities. In consequence of a paralytic affection he was almost entirely prevented, for the five last years of his life, from the discharge of his public duties. Yet his heart was ever with you when you assembled here. His fervent prayers constantly ascended to the throne of grace in behalf of his people, and he

Digitized by Google

continued to take a lively interest in all their concerns till his latest hour.

"Not many hours before his departure I visited him. He was calm, he was resigned, and happy. His conflict with his spiritual adversaries appeared to be over, and he was waiting for his crown. He is gone to rest. We shall see him no more till these heavens and this earth shall have passed away. Farewell, affectionate colleague! Faithful shepherd, afflicted saint, farewell! Thine active spirit has left its prison of clay, and found a resting place in the paradise of God.

"As a preacher he was solemn and judicious. He delighted in practical subjects, and would rather instruct and edify his hearers than charm them with the beauties of style or the powers of eloquence. Few men were ever more punctual in all their engagements. He made it a rule never to neglect an appointment, where it was possible to fulfill it. His spirit and his zeal were greater than his bodily vigor, and the influence of his family was often necessary to prevent him from undertaking the performance of duties when he could scarcely leave his bed without assistance. In his intercourse with his people he was prudent and affectionate. He always manifested a tender regard for the lambs of his flock, and would soon extend his charity and love to those who ap-

Digitized by Google

peared to labor under the burden of sin. He could not endure disorder in the house of God. It would distress his very soul when sinners were seen to despise the great salvation, pour contempt upon the institutions of religion, or disturb the order and harmony of divine worship. From these trials he has at length passed away. He is now worshiping, we doubt not, in that church in the heavens where the wicked cease from troubling, and where all is order and harmony, praise and love.

"A few words to the united congregations here assembled must close this address. My brethren, your pastor is no more. He has ceased from his labors. Did you love him? Have you been benefited by his toils among you? Has he often fed you with knowledge? Has he comforted you in your distress? Has he relieved your mind when burdened with sin? Was he the messenger of glad tidings when darkness and despair surrounded you? Has he been the instrument by which a new song of praise has been put into your mouth? Then you will bless his memory, and cherish the recollection of his faithful services while life endures. Christians of this flock, weep not as those who have no hope. You will see him again. You will meet him again to part no more. And oh, how delightful will be that scene, when he shall present you before your Saviour with

Digitized by Google

this introduction, Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me! How will your souls rejoice together when you shall hear the Saviour say to him, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord! and, to you, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world? This will complete the luster of his crown, while your joy will be perfect. Oh, what heavenly melody, when, with united voices, you shall ascribe, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, to the Lamb that was slain! Could he now address you, he would say, Remember the words I spake unto you while I was yet with you, and be ye followers of them, who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises.

"Ah, sinners, what benefit have you reaped from the labors of your deceased minister? He is gone, but your concerns with him are not yet finally closed. He must account for the services he has performed to you, and you must account for your improvement under his ministry. And what will you say? Oh, remember his solemn and dying request delivered to you on the last Sabbath, Prepare to meet me at the bar of God. Can you think of this without terror? You have lost the benefit of his life, you will hear him preach no more, and will you also lose the benefit of

Digitized by Google

his death? Shall this solemn scene fail to make an impression upon your heart? Come, once more, view the remains of your departed friend and pastor, and let this solemn spectacle bring to your remembrance how oft those lips have uttered to you the words of truth, and warned you to flee from the wrath to come; how oft those eyes have flowed with tears over your impenitence and hardness of heart, and those hands have been stretched forth in prayer for your salvation. Tremble at the thought of the judgment bar. Go, with the publican of old, smite upon your breast, and cry, God be merciful to me a sinner. Your minister is dead, but the Saviour lives. Flee to his grace, flee to his blood, flee for your lives, take hold of the hope set before you in the Gospel, and it may yet be well with your souls. It is not too late; your sins may yet be pardoned. There is yet virtue in the blood of Christ to cleanse your foulest stains. Delay no longer. You stand on the brink of the eternal world, and if you die in your sins, you die accursed, and are lost forever. May God have mercy on you, and pluck you as brands out of the burning!

"To the bereaved widow, and the fatherless children, we would say, May the spirit of consolation rest upon you! Your husband, your father, is not dead, but sleepeth. He sleeps in Jesus, and he will

Digitized by Google

surely awake again. Oh, prepare, like him, to sleep, and, like him, to awake at the call of God. Let his example be always before you, and in all your troubles flee to him who is a Father to the fatherless, and the widow's God. If in him you put your trust, he will not leave you comfortless. He promised to Abraham, and the promise extends to all believers, Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. How often have you heard, from that voice now silent in death, that in the hour of trouble and distress there are no consolations to be compared with those which flow from religion in the soul! Your loss indeed is great, but remember that his gain is greater. To the fatherly care and the tender mercies of our God would we now commend those upon whom this stroke has fallen. And, my brethren of these congregations, next to the divine protection, would we commit them to your affectionate interest and attention. They have claims upon your sympathy and your love. Did you respect and revere the father? Let at least a portion of that respect be bestowed upon his family. They will need your counsel and your assistance. Remember that it is an indispensable Christian duty to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction. You have already been commended for your patience and your generosity, and surely it is no time at present

Digitized by Google

to withhold your Christian sympathy and aid. Fill up the measure of your kindness, full and overflowing, and the Lord will reward you.

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that we may be faithful to your souls, and that you may profit under our ministrations, that, when we approach the close of life, we may be enabled to say in the language of the text, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. Amen."

The two Churches of Shannock and Harlingen remained in connection until March, 1821, about a year after the death of the senior pastor, when, having failed to obtain a colleague for Mr. Labagh, notwithstanding their successive efforts to secure the services of the Rev. Isaac Ferris, now Dr. Ferris, Chancellor of the University of the city of New York, and the Rev. Isaac N. Wyckoff, now Dr. Wyckoff, of Albany, New York, the united Consis-

Digitized by Google

tories agreed upon a peaceable separation. To effect this, each Consistory presented a call to the Rev. Mr. Labagh for his undivided service. He accepted the call to Harlingen, and the Classis having released him from his connection with the Church at Shannock, he preached his farewell sermon to that congregation on the 24th of June, 1821, from 2 Corinthians, 13: 11, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

He was shortly after installed as pastor of the Church at Harlingen by the Classis of Philadelphia. It may serve to mark the era of modern, and we may add, most acceptable innovation, in regard to the appointments of our churches, to state in this connection, that by order of the Consistory of Harlingen, *three stoves* were purchased and set up in the church in December, 1821. Previous to this time the people were accustomed to use the old fashioned portable foot stove, and whatever other inventions their ingenuity, stimulated by their necessities, was able to suggest.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

Effort to re-organize the Theological Seminary — Previous History — Extract from Dr. Livingston's Baccalaureate — Movement to endow the third Professorship — Mr. Labagh Chairman of the Committee on the Professorate — His spirited Report — Appointed Agent of General Synod for the Collection of Funds — His Success — Rejoicings in the Church — Noble Self-sacrifice of the Ministry — Enlargement of the Library at New Brunswick — Mr. Labagh on the Committee in regard to an Agency to Holland — Appointed to go to Holland — The Holland Agency given up — Further Efforts — Dr. Froeligh and the Secession of 1822 — Dr. Froeligh deposed from the Ministry — Some Account of Him — New Jersey Colonization Society — Mr. Labagh one of its Founders — His Report to General Synod on Colonization — Views in regard to Benevolent Societies — A dissatisfied Student — *Note:* A Singular Proposition — Difficulties growing out of his Case — Mr. Labagh a Delegate to the Presbyterian General Assembly — Amicable Arrangement.

In the year 1822, the long cherished desire to have the Theological Seminary of the Church reörganized and equipped with a view to more efficient service in the education of young men for the gospel

Digitized by Google

ministry, led the General Synod to adopt a resolution that "one more effort be made to endow a Professorship."

From 1784 until 1810 Dr. John H. Livingston, while performing the ordinary duties of the ministry as one of the pastors of the Collegiate Church in the city of New York, held also the office of Professor of Theology, assisted by Dr. Theodoric Romeyn, of Schenectady, New York, and Dr. Solomon Froeligh, of Hackensack, New Jersey. The Trustees of Queens College, which had suspended its operations in 1790, on the death of Dr. Hardenbergh, its first president, made overtures to the General Synod in 1807, with the design of reviving that institution, and placing it upon a more stable basis. They proposed that the Theological Professorate be united with the College, and that the Theological Professor be its president. In reference to this transaction, Dr. Livingston, a few years later, when the project had been happily and successfully consummated, expressed himself in the following language:

"Upon the decease of Dr. Hardenbergh a call was made upon another, who by imperious circumstances was then prevented from accepting it; the College again declined into its former state, every species of instruction at length ceased, and nothing but the name remained. And even its name and

Digitized by Google

existence would have been obliterated, had it not pleased the Lord to put it into the hearts of the Trustees to revert to the first principles of the Charter, and recollect that this College was built upon a foundation in some respects different from all others. That it was not merely a literary institution, but was designed principally to be a Theological Seminary. They therefore wisely determined to appeal to the Reformed Dutch Churches, and accordingly made a spirited and pious overture upon this interesting subject. The movement proved propitious. The General Synod was at that very juncture earnestly contemplating a plan for accomplishing their favorite object of opening a Divinity Hall, and establishing a Theological Professorship. The overture was readily accepted; and the Churches and Trustees entered into a mutual covenant which has given a new form, and we trust, new life and energy to the institution."*

As the result of this arrangement, $20,000 were raised to endow the Theological Professorship, and Dr. Livingston, who had already been chosen to the two-fold office of Professor of Theology, and President of the College, having resigned his pastoral

* An address delivered at the Commencement held in Queens College, in New Jersey, September 25, 1810; by J. H. Livingston, D.D., Professor of Theology, and President of Queens College.

Digitized by Google

charge in the Collegiate Church, removed to New Brunswick, New Jersey, in October, 1810.

The Rev. John Schureman, D.D., was chosen as an additional professor in 1815, and discharged the duties of that office until 1818, when he died. In 1819 he was succeeded in the professorship by the Rev. John Ludlow, who, on his resignation in 1823, was, in turn, succeeded by the Rev. John De Witt. The second professorship, however, was not endowed, until, in conformity with the resolution of General Synod adopted in 1822, to which allusion has already been made, a subscription was opened for that purpose, and the requisite funds were secured within the bounds of the Particular Synod of New York.

In 1825 the General Synod took into serious consideration the feasibility of endowing a third professorship, an object which the whole denomination had long contemplated with very earnest desire. In this question, as in every question affecting the permanant establishment and efficiency of the educational institutions of the Church, Mr. Labagh felt and manifested the deepest interest. He was chairman of the committee on the professorate, and in that capacity he submitted to the Synod a report, in which he urged upon that body, with great force and spirit, the importance of prompt and energetic action.

He states, in the report which he presented in

Digitized by Google

behalf of the committee, "That the various subjects referred to them have received their serious and deliberate consideration.

"The first and most important of these subjects is the communication, from the Board of Trustees of Queens College, accompanied with the generous offer of the Consistory of New York. On this subject, which so deeply involves the interest and the future prosperity and enlargement of the Church, your committee fully believe that the time is come when the theological and literary Institution, which has been the subject of so many anxieties and prayers of our fathers, and of ourselves, is now to be established upon a permanent and respectable foundation, or else to drag along a precarious existence, weak and sickly, until it dies never to revive. The influence of such an event upon the character of the Reformed Dutch Church, and upon the interests of religion, is too painful for your committee to contemplate. It cannot be that in the present age of enterprise and Christian liberality the sons of our Reformed Zion would suffer the brand of degeneracy to be stamped upon them. What has been already done within the bounds of the southern Synod, and what is now the generous offer of the Consistory of New York, is consoling evidence that there is a spirit of attachment to the Church, and zeal for the promotion of its in-

Digitized by Google

terest, which yields to none. Within the Synod of Albany there are ample means; God has blessed them with wealth, and your committee cannot hesitate to believe, that they will be willing to honor God with their substance, in blessing the Churches with their liberal donations. The Synod of Albany, which embraces the largest section of the whole Church, your committee cannot believe will consent to be behind their southern brethren, in any measure in which the honor and the interests of the Church are so deeply involved. It requires nothing more than a combined and strenuous effort to secure success; the object is completely within our power; our means are ample, and the voice of Providence, and the voice of the Church, unitedly call to exertion. The consequence of a failure in this object, your committee cannot contemplate without painful emotions; it would damp the spirit of the south; it would spread a gloom over our prospects, and excite a jealousy, which is the bane of Christian and brotherly confidence; those tender and affectionate ties by which the different sections of our Church are bound together would be weakened; such consequences are to be deprecated and avoided; the harmony and integrity of the Churches are to be maintained by the united exertions of the whole body.

"The sum of $25,000 is now required to carry into

Digitized by Google

complete effect the original plan of this Synod in relation to the Theological College, as well as to realize the liberal donation of the Consistory of New York. That respectable body, to whom the gratitude of the Churches is due, will give $1,700 a year for three years, whenever the above sum shall have been subscribed for the third professorship, and the whole establishment, literary and theological, shall be in full operation. The time for vigorous exertion is therefore now come, and every friend to our Reformed Zion is now called upon to lend his active aid.

"The Synod of New York have already raised by subscription $26,000 for the second professorship, and more than $4,000 for other purposes connected with the Institution; the committee would therefore earnestly recommend, that agents be immediately appointed to open subscriptions in all the Classes under the jurisdiction of the Synod of Albany, which agents shall proceed with all possible expedition to fulfill the object of their appointment, and that it be enjoined upon such agents to finish their work, and report to the president of this Synod by the last of August next. The committee would further recommend, that this Synod hold an adjourned session at New Brunswick, on the second Wednesday of September next, in order that if God in his providence should give success to the agents, this Synod may immedi-

Digitized by Google

ately proceed to the appointment of a third professor, and thus accomplish the object to which the desires and prayers of the Church have been so long directed, and with which the prosperity of the Church is so intimately connected."

The report was adopted, and among the persons designated by Synod to act as agents to obtain the necessary funds, we find the name of Mr. Labagh, who was appointed in connection with two other clergymen, the Rev. J. F. Schermerhorn and the Rev. Peter P. Rouse, to solicit subscriptions within the bounds of the Classis of Montgomery.

He entered promptly upon the duty assigned to the agency, of which it is not improper to say that the larger part of the labor devolved upon himself, and in June, 1826, submitted to General Synod a satisfactory report, in which the amount received by him, in pledge or payment, was shown to be $1138 50. During the same year he was appointed to receive subscriptions for the Theological Seminary in the Classes of Bergen and Paramus, within whose bounds no effort for that purpose had yet been made. At the meeting of Synod in June, 1827, he reported to that body that he had executed his commission, and received pledges to the amount of $1797 00. Of the sum required for the endowment of the third profes-

Digitized by Google

sorship, it thus appears that nearly three thousand dollars were secured, in a large measure, by his own personal solicitations and efforts. To have contributed in any degree, and especially in such a degree to the attainment of an object so vital to the best interests of the Church, the diffusion of evangelical doctrine, and the extension of that blessed kingdom "which is righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost," cannot fail to be regarded as a sacred claim upon the gratitude of those who now enjoy the fruits of so many sacrifices and toils.

The effort was rewarded with success, and, in the permanent endowment of the third professorship in the Theological Seminary, the Church beheld with rejoicing the answer of her prayers, the realization of her hopes, the crowning triumph of her earnest and protracted struggles. The conferences, the deliberations, the plans, the sacrifices, the labors of years, here culminated, in a result so auspicious and animating, that it filled the heart of the Church with the deepest emotions of gratitude and praise to God. The long agony was over. The fear of failure gave place to the most cheering anticipations of future prosperity and enlargement. The stone had at last reached the summit of the mountain, not to recoil upon those who were laboring to urge it onward, but to go thundering down on the other side.

Digitized by Google

It would be unjust to the noble and self-sacrificing spirits who met that crisis in our Church's history, to pass by in silence their generous devotion to the common good. There were many large hearted and liberal men in the ranks of her laity, and of honorable women there were not a few, but it cannot be disguised that the power which, under God, confronted the emergency with invincible courage, and decided the fortunes of that final struggle, lay in the ranks of her evangelical ministry. Poor, indeed, they were, in the possessions and good things of this world, and often subjected to the restraints of a most rigorous economy, but they yet found means, by the blessing of a gracious Providence, to contribute nearly half of the whole sum required. In the language of one who was called home, alas! too early for us, to his reward in heaven, and to whom while living it pleased God to grant, in addition to the gift of fortune, the better gift of a noble and generous Christian heart: "The funds for the endowment of the third theological professorship were secured. Of the aggregate amount then raised, not less than $10,000 were contributed by the clergy. Others gave of their abundance, but these of their penury. Many of them, when they gave, handed over the little savings of years. Like the widow, they 'cast in all the living they had.' They subscribed their hun-

Digitized by Google

dreds and *paid them;* and of some of them so subscribing, I am ready to affirm, that if prompt payment of bills incurred for the necessary support of their families had been demanded, they would have been compelled to have sold portions of their scanty libraries, or the more scanty furniture of their households. Such was the spirit of the men who revived the College in 1825, in connection with the Seminary, and such the gifts they brought. Let their memory be cherished, and let their example be held worthy of all imitation. Ours was, indeed, an ancestry of hope; let us prove ourselves worthy of it by perfecting their work, and carrying it out to a fuller consummation."*

* Address before the Alumni of Rutgers College, July 27, 1852, by the Rev. Abraham Polhemus, D.D., of Hopewell, New York.

Dr. Polhemus was born at Hallett's Cove, now Astoria, Long Island, in 1812. He entered the Sophomore class in Rutgers College, in 1828. He graduated in 1831. He made a profession of religion in the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, New York city, in 1831 or 1832, and shortly afterwards entered the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick. He was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Classis of New York, in July, 1835, and was ordained to the work of the ministry, and installed pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church of Hopewell, Dutchess county, New York, October 28, 1835. He visited Europe in 1846, and besides attending the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, held in London, in August of that year, made a tour through the most interesting portions of England, Scotland, France and Holland. He received invitations at

Digitized by Google

In addition to the endowment of the third professorship, there was another subject of great importance, which had frequently occupied the attention of the Church. The library of the literary and theological Institutions was known to be altogether inadequate to their wants, and although a strong desire was felt to have the deficiency supplied, yet the demand upon the resources of the Church, occasioned

different times, after his return, to the pastoral charge of the Reformed Dutch Churches of Utica, and Newburgh, New York, and of Belleville, New Jersey, all of which he declined. At its annual commencement, in July, 1856, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of the city of New York. In January, 1857, he received a call to the pastorate of the North Reformed Dutch Church of Newark, New Jersey, then but recently organized. After much hesitation, he was finally led, by what he conceived to be the indications of Providence, to seek the dissolution of his relation to the Church at Hopewell, in order to accept the call to Newark. He was released from his charge by the Classis of Poughkeepsie, March 23, 1857, and installed pastor of the North Church of Newark, May 3, 1857. Having successfully labored in his new relation until the 12th of the ensuing August, he left Newark for the purpose of visiting his old friends at Hopewell. While stopping on his way at the house of his brother-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Forsyth, at Newburgh, he was attacked by a sickness from which he never recovered. After lingering for two months and sixteen days, his spirit, rejoicing in the hope of glory, was released from the body and entered into its heavenly rest, on the 28th of October, the anniversary of his ordination at Hopewell, just twenty-two years before.

Digitized by Google

by the effort to endow the professorship, rendered it necessary to postpone any decided action, for the accomplishment of that object, to a future day. In the report submitted by Mr. Labagh, to the General Synod, at its session of June, 1825, a resolution was offered and adopted expressive of the opinion that "it would be premature at present to set on foot a subscription under the authority of Synod, for the purpose of raising funds to purchase a theological library." That this was a judicious and politic decision, under the circumstances, no one can entertain a doubt. The most effective and useful efforts are those which are concentrated, and put forth with persevering energy, for the attainment of single ends. The result in this case fully vindicated the wisdom of the course pursued.

No sooner, however, was the professorship endowed, and established upon a safe and permanent basis, than the General Synod began to move in the matter of procuring an adequate library. At the session of June, 1826, that body appointed a committee, of which Mr. Labagh was a member, "to inquire into the expediency of sending an agency to Holland, to solicit donations for the theological and literary Institutions at New Brunswick." The committee reported at the same session, and in their report the object for which the donations were to be solicited is

Digitized by Google

very clearly defined. "From a variety of considerations," say they, "your committee feel persuaded that it is very desirable to send one or more agents to the land of our fathers, for the purpose of gaining information relative to the state of the Church there, as well as to solicit aid for our Institutions at New Brunswick. It is our impression, that if suitable agents are appointed, there is an encouraging prospect that such an appointment will be attended with no little success. Your committee, therefore, recommend for adoption, the following:

"*Resolved*, That two agents be appointed to visit Holland, to ask donations in books and money."

To this the committee added another resolution, requesting the Board of Corporation to designate the agents, and devise means to defray the expenses of the journey; and providing that the agents, when thus appointed, have their commission duly certified by the officers of the Synod.

The recommendation of the committee received the approval of Synod, and in June, 1827, two agents were appointed to sail for Holland, and endeavor to accomplish the object contemplated in the resolution. The persons chosen to undertake this responsible mission were the Rev. Messrs. Peter Labagh and John Ludlow, *primarii*, and the Rev. Messrs. Thos.

Digitized by Google

De Witt and John F. Schermerhorn, *secundi*. Mr. Ludlow having declined the appointment, Mr. Schermerhorn, his *secundus*, succeeded to his place, and at an early day transmitted to the President of Synod his letter of acceptance, but Mr. Labagh having omitted to communicate any *official* information of his acceptance, and other difficulties having arisen, the Board of Corporation, in 1828, referred the whole subject to General Synod for further instructions.

After mature deliberation, the Synod adopted a report, submitted by the committee on Correspondence, in which it was proposed to reöpen with the Reformed Dutch Church of Holland, the correspondence which had been suspended in consequence of the political convulsions and terrible wars which desolated that country during the sanguinary career of Napoleon Bonaparte. The Synod also adopted a resolution, proposed by the committee, that the agency to Holland be discontinued.

This action, it is scarcely necessary to add, put an end to all further measures to procure assistance from abroad. Mr. Labagh and his colleague were allowed to remain quietly at home, engaged in the more congenial employments of pastoral labor. The effort in behalf of the library, however, did not cease with the discontinuance of the agency. The Synod, at its same session, was urged by the superintendents of

Digitized by Google

the College to adopt such measures immediately as would be efficient to enlarge the library.

It was accordingly resolved that the ministers throughout the Church be requested to present, in such way as they might deem best, this subject to their respective congregations, and that the agent of the Board of Corporation, whose special duty it was to collect the outstanding subscriptions to the Professoral fund, make this also an object of particular attention in prosecuting the business of his agency.

In addition to this resolution another was adopted, providing "that a special effort be made throughout all the Churches to realize, if possible, at least $2,000, to be collected by agents specially appointed for this purpose,—$1,600 to be applied to the increase of the library, and $400 for a course of lectures on Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology." Among the agents appointed for the Classis of Philadelphia, to carry out this resolution, we find the name of Mr. Labagh. That he performed the duty assigned him with fidelity and success, there is the most abundant evidence to show.

Having traced the history of the effort in behalf of the Theological Seminary to a successful result, it is necessary to return once more to the year 1822. In the fall of that year an event took place which attracted the attention of the whole Church, and finally

Digitized by Google

came before the General Synod for judicial action. The Rev. Solomon Froeligh, D.D., pastor of the Churches of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh, New Jersey, had for nearly twenty years been disaffected toward the denomination of which he was a minister, and had on several occasions given evidence of a desire to awaken in the minds of others a feeling similar to his own. His intentions at length developed themselves in an organized conspiracy to divide the Church. What were the real motives which impelled him to the course he pursued, it is needless to inquire. By one, it has been said that "having made himself liable to censure by acts of aggression in a neighboring Church, he preferred to secede rather than to submit to the Church authorities;"* by another, that the movement inaugurated by him was an attempt to revive the old "contest between practical religion and dead orthodoxy,"† of the latter of which he is supposed to have been the representative. It is possible that both the considerations here referred to, may have been combined to some extent in the motives which led to the secession.

Dr. Froeligh's attempt to organize an independent ecclesiastical body, by a secession from the Reformed Dutch Church, was consummated at Schraalenburgh, October 25, 1822. His followers, consisting of four

* Rev. D. D. Demarest, D.D. † Rev. E. T. Corwin.

Digitized by Google

ministers, every one of them already under sentence of deposition from the clerical office, and seven congregations, with their consistories, were formed, under his direction, into a separate body, by the name and title of the "True Reformed Dutch Church in America." The ground upon which they justified their action was, the prevalence of erroneous doctrines, and the *neglect of discipline*, in the Reformed Dutch Church; the latter, a singular reason, truly, to be assigned by four men, who, for their culpable inconsistency, had themselves been disciplined, and sentenced to be deposed from the gospel ministry!

The whole subject was brought up before the General Synod, at its annual session, in Albany, in June, 1823, and was, by that body, referred to a committee of its members, consisting of the Rev. Messrs. Philip Duryee, Peter Labagh and Samuel A. Van Vranken, and the elders Messrs. J. R. Hardenbergh and Abraham Van Vechten. A number of documents were submitted for examination, and among them a pamphlet published by the seceders, in which, while they attempted to justify their conduct, they were unsparing in their accusations against the Reformed Dutch Church.

The committee in due time reported, and, after reciting the principal facts in the case, announced the conclusion at which they had arrived in the following paragraph:

Digitized by Google

"Your committee are therefore of opinion, that the Rev. Dr. Froeligh should be cited, without delay, to appear and answer to the charges above detailed, before this Synod."

Dr. Froeligh was accordingly twice cited to appear before the General Synod, but having on both occasions refused to answer in person, and having, in the last instance, informed the bearer of the citation that "he should not reply to it," the Synod, after a preamble containing a statement of the facts before them, adopted the following resolutions:

"*Resolved*, That this Synod, by reason of such refusal, as well as upon an examination of the said pamphlet, do adjudge him guilty of the several offences, so as aforesaid charged against him.

"*Resolved*, That Dr. Froeligh be, and he hereby is, removed from his said office of professor, for the said offences, and that he be and hereby is, suspended from his office as minister of the Gospel, until he shall exhibit satisfactory evidence to this Synod, of his sincere penitence, and full submission to the authority of the regular, constituted ecclesiastical judicatories of the Reformed Dutch Church.

"*Resolved*, That the stated clerk transmit a certified copy of the foregoing resolutions to Dr. Froeligh and his congregation."

Digitized by Google

The duty devolved upon Mr. Labagh, as a member of the committee, and of the Synod, to whose decision the case of Dr. Froeligh was submitted, was one from which, if he had consulted his feelings, he would have desired to be exempt. While he could not do otherwise than condemn the course which Dr. Froeligh had pursued, and while he was sternly opposed to his schismatical and pernicious schemes, in which he thought he discovered more of personal irritation than of zeal for the interests of truth, he was yet unable to divest himself of the recollections of his early years. Dr. Froeligh had been his pastor, and had received him into the communion of the Church; under Dr. Froeligh's direction he had for two years pursued his theological studies; at his induction into the ministry Dr. Froeligh had preached the sermon, and had laid his hands upon his head in the solemn rite of ordination. Besides, he was now an old man, whose years had passed beyond the limit of three score and ten. These circumstances were all adapted to awaken his sympathies, and to plead for the exercise of forbearance. On the other hand, the peace of the Church had been broken; the cause of religion had received a wound in the house of its friend; an undue lenity in dealing with a flagrant wrong might be as injurious as open hostility to the truth. He saw the path of duty, and he walked therein. While he

Digitized by Google

pitied the offender, he gave his voice in condemnation of the offence.

Dr. Froeligh was a man of unquestioned intellect and learning. He was doubtless guilty of grave departures from duty; but there are too many instances on record in which good men have fallen into sin to authorize, on our part, the judgment that the wrongs which he committed were absolutely incompatible with the existence of true piety in the heart. The grace of God sometimes takes up its abode where no human being could dwell with comfort for a single day. Had it not been for the ill-advised and blameworthy project, which seems to have possessed him with something like the force of a passion, the name of Solomon Froeligh would have come down to us as that of one of the great and venerable men of his time. For the following sketch of his life, in which the more prominent events are very briefly exhibited, the writer is indebted to another:

"Dr. Solomon Froeligh was born at Red Hook, in 1750, and received his first serious impressions, under the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Schuneman, at the age of fourteen. At the age of eighteen, he was placed for instruction under the care of Rev. Derick Romeyn, where he continued three years. Thence he entered the Academy at Hackensack, then under the management of Peter Wilson. After he had

Digitized by Google

studied here three years, he received the degree of A.B. from the College of New Jersey.

"He commenced his theological studies under the supervision of Rev. John H. Goetschius. After three years' study, his instructor and the consistory appointed him a catechist, and he was accordingly often engaged in instructing the youth of the congregation.

"In October, 1774, he was examined for licensure before the convention. The Rev. Mr. Leydt and Dr. Hardenbergh examined him on the languages, and Rev. Dr. Livingston on theology, etc. Soon after, he received a call from the four united congregations of Queens county, on Long Island, and was ordained and installed as their pastor, in the Church at Jamaica, on the 11th of January, 1775, the Rev. Lambertus de Ronde, of New York, preaching the ordination sermon.

"After preaching in various places, Dr. Froeligh was finally, in 1786, settled over the Church at Schraalenburgh, where he continued about forty years, till his death.

"Soon after his settlement here, he began to instruct young men in theology. Any of our ministers were then, and long after, at liberty to give such instruction; but the students were required to spend a short season of study with the Professor, in order to

Digitized by Google

obtain a certificate to admit them to the preparatory examination. The convention had chosen a Professor of Theology in 1784, and afterwards two Lectors of Theology; but the students were still required to go to the Professor for their certificates. Dr. Meyer, of Pompton, one of these Lectors, died in 1791, and Rev. Dr. Froeligh was chosen in his stead.

"In 1797, the convention appointed two additional Professors of Theology, viz: Rev. D. Romeyn and Rev. S. Froeligh; but, in 1823, the latter was deposed by General Synod. Dr. Froeligh died at Schraalenburgh, October 8, 1827."*

An account has already been given of the part which Mr. Labagh performed in securing the permanent establishment of the Institutions at New Brunswick, and the proper facilities for the education of young men for the ministry. Not content, however, with extending his cheerful coöperation to the religious and other enterprises within his own Church, that were suggested by a regard to the general good, Mr. Labagh also took a deep interest in all the great benevolent institutions of his day, in which Christians met on common ground, and combined their efforts for the attainment of common ends. While he loved the Church of his ancestors with a truly

* Christian Intelligencer, March 31, 1859.

Digitized by Google

filial affection, his heart was large enough to embrace in its regard all those who loved the honor of his Saviour, and the welfare of his fellow-men. Never was there a more open, ingenuous, and kindly spirit, and never did any cause which gave augury of beneficial results appeal to his sympathies in vain.

Allusion has already been made to his agency in organizing the Somerset County Bible Society. With equal sincerity of heart, and with the same zeal that characterized all his efforts to sustain the institutions of religion and benevolence, did he enter, in 1824, into the movement to establish the New Jersey Colonization Society, as auxiliary to the National Society which was organized in 1818. He was not only one of the founders and earliest members of the New Jersey Society, but from the day of its organization onward he was its liberal and steadfast supporter. From the outset, it enlisted in its favor the ablest and most distinguished men of the state. At its third anniversary, held at Princeton, in 1827, Governor Vroom, since the American minister at the court of Berlin, and Judge Potts, and the Rev. Dr. Holdich, then of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, but now secretary of the American Bible Society, spoke in advocacy of its principles and object, with an eloquence and power which have rarely been surpassed.

Nor was Mr. Labagh behind them in the energy

Digitized by Google

with which, as occasion offered, he upheld the cause of the society, and urged upon the public mind its claims to a generous consideration. A few years later, in 1834, when, as a member of the General Synod, he was appointed, with Dr. Ferris and others, to constitute the committee on the State of Religion, he took occasion, in the report, which, as chairman of the committee he submitted to the Synod, to present to the attention of that judicatory, and thus to the Churches it represented, the cause of African Colonization, which lay so near his own heart. The following extract from the report, as adopted by the General Synod, clearly indicates the sentiments of that venerable body, as well as of the eminent gentlemen by whom the report was introduced:

"The American Colonization Society is meeting the expectations of its friends in providing an asylum for the emancipated colored man of our own country; is spreading through the slaveholding portions of these states a healthful feeling on the subject of slavery, which, it is hoped, will lead finally to the entire removal of that curse from our country; and has secured to the Christian Church on the coast of Africa, in the colony of Liberia, a most important center of missionary effort, from which, diverging in different directions, our missionaries may scatter the good seed of the word through the whole of south-

Digitized by Google

western Africa, and from ocean to ocean. It is delightful to observe how generally Christian denominations are regarding it in this light; and that several have accordingly, through it, either sent already, or are making arrangements to send their missionaries to degraded, neglected, and oppressed Africa. While we remember how great are the blessings of civil and religious freedom, and all the privileges we possess, and commemorate their enjoyment in the house of God, the claims of Africa in her wretchedness, and that a wretchedness which nominal Christendom has aided in deepening, should be particularly remembered."

It may be added, also, that to the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, in connection with which the Reformed Dutch Church so happily carried on its missionary operations up to a very recent date,* and the American Seamen's Friend Society, he was always a very warm friend, and, being blessed with means, a liberal contributor. Of the Bible Society he said, on a public occasion: "While this Society has been blessing with

* The connection was dissolved by resolution of the General Synod, at its session held at Ithaca, New York, in June, 1857, and by similar resolution of the American Board, at its annual meeting held at Providence, Rhode Island, September, 1857.

Digitized by Google

the word of life every section of our own country, it is efficiently directing its charities to other lands, and is preparing the way, in concert with similar foreign societies, to give the Bible to the *world* in a definite period. Already have its successful labors commended it to, and secured for it a high place in the confidence of Christians; and it should continue to receive increasing benefactions from every member of our Churches." On the same occasion, he bore a similar and deserved testimony to the usefulness of the Seamen's Friend Society. "In the principal ports on our coast," said he, "it has its seamen's chaplains, and various means of raising the neglected and generous mariner, and saving him from the influence of evils, which have made his pursuits the grave of every pious emotion and holy purpose, and rendered him the confirmed slave of debasing habits. Abroad it has established chaplaincies in the Sandwich Islands, Canton, Havre, and is (in 1834), preparing to occupy several other important places.

"Our indebtedness in all the enjoyments of social life to the adventurous sailor, his low moral condition, his exposure to sudden death, and the fact that he goes, in many a case, from our own Churches, should give this charity a place near every Christian's heart, and a large share of his bounty."

Digitized by Google

In 1828 an incident occurred in the Church, which again called into requisition the services of Mr. Labagh. In July, of the previous year, a student* of

*Mr. Leonard B. Van Dyke, a member of a church under the care of the Classis of Albany.

A pamphlet of thirty-one pages, which grew out of the transaction here referred to, was printed at Saratoga Springs, in 1829, entitled: "The Unlawfulness of the Subscription required of the Ministers of the Gospel of the Reformed Dutch Church; by a Friend to the Bible." The writer strongly objected to the rule in the Constitution, article I, section x, which requires the ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church, by the subscription of their names to the formula, to assent to the doctrines held by that Church, and to promise to teach and defend them! From the pamphlet, it would appear that he was in favor of allowing all ministers, respectively, to use the facilities, and the moral power of their office, for the promulgation of any doctrine which to each one might seem best!

A more preposterous idea was probably never advanced. The Church requires no person to enter her ministry against his own consent. But if, on his *voluntary* application, he be admitted to licensure or ordination, it surely cannot be regarded as oppressive or unreasonable to require conformity to her established doctrines and usages. If he does not like them, he has an easy remedy. He need not incur the obligation to teach or to observe them.

"The world is all before him, where to choose
His place of rest, and Providence his guide."

Whoever feels that his convictions and his heart are not in the Church which he serves as a minister, whatever Church that may be, is in honor bound, to say nothing of any higher consideration, to resign his office, and to seek for more congenial associations elsewhere.

The writer of the pamphlet concludes his argument, against the

Digitized by Google

the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, having passed through the usual course of study with commendable diligence, presented himself, with others, before the Board of Superintendents for examination, with a view to his obtaining the professorial certificate which is ordinarily essential to examination for licensure by the Classis. He was found to entertain doubts of so serious a nature in regard to several important doctrines, that he could not subscribe to the standards of the Church. The Board of Superintendents adopted a resolution advising him to continue a longer time in the seminary, and to pay particular attention to the subjects in connection with which his difficulties arose.

Without either acceding to the suggestions of the

rule requiring subscription to the doctrines of the Church, in the following words:

"We have the right to hope, that those whom it concerns will not shrink from the performance of their duty; and that the General Synod will not wait until our Theological Hall shall be emptied of its occupants, and the Churches stripped of their ministers, before they will *expunge* the unlawful, unscriptural formula of *Subscription*, from the *Constitution*. And every true friend of the Church will say, *stet veritas, ruat coelum*."

Were that formula to disappear from the Constitution, there would soon be neither "Theological Hall" to be "emptied," nor "Churches' to be "stripped of their ministers." And it might be written of our denomination, as it was written of ancient Troy, *Ilium fuit*.

Digitized by Google

Board, or receiving a regular dismission from the Seminary, he applied to a Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church, for licensure, and was accepted by them, in violation, as it was alleged, of certain articles of correspondence, mutually agreed upon by the Reformed Dutch Synod and the Presbyterian Assembly. The matter subsequently came up for adjudication on complaint of the General Synod. A communication on the subject was received in 1829, from the General Assembly, through its stated clerk, the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D., and referred to a committee, of which Dr. J. M. Mathews and the Rev. B. C. Taylor were members, and of which Mr. Labagh was chairman.

In the report submitted to Synod by Mr. Labagh, in behalf of the committee, they state: "That they have attentively considered the sentiments expressed in the communication (of the General Assembly), and the decision of that highly respectable body, on which they feel no disposition to animadvert. Yet, in order to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances, which may be unpleasant in their tendency, and calculated to interrupt the harmony which at present exists between the two Churches, your committee would recommend the adoption of the following resolution, in order to be communicated to the next General Assembly:

Digitized by Google

"*Resolved*, (If the General Assembly concur herein), That the following additional article be added to the articles of correspondence between the two Churches,

"That none of the inferior judicatories, under the care of the corresponding Churches, shall be at liberty to admit into their respective bodies, or under their care, any student, or licentiate, from the sister Church, without a regular dismission from the ecclesiastical body, or theological seminary, to which he is considered as attached."

The Synod appointed Mr. Labagh the *secundus* or alternate of Dr. William C. Brownlee, to attend the next meeting of the General Assembly, as the delegate from the Reformed Dutch Church. Dr. Brownlee being prevented from discharging the duties of the office, they devolved upon Mr. Labagh. He accordingly attended the session of the Assembly, and in June, 1830, reported to General Synod that "he was cordially received, and admitted to the privileges of a corresponding member; and that the General Assembly readily adopted the article proposed at the last session of this body, to be added to the articles of correspondence between the two Churches."

Digitized by Google

The article thus adopted is still to be found in the respective digests of the two Churches, among the rules established for the regulation of that truly fraternal and affectionate correspondence, which has subsisted with such happy results, between the two denominations, for a period of nearly three-quarters of a century.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

GREAT REVIVAL AT HARLINGEN — RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF SOMERSET COUNTY — TENNENT — FRELINGHUYSEN — SUCCESSES AT HARLINGEN IN 1810 AND 1817 — THE REVIVAL OF 1831 — ITS COMMENCEMENT — INCIDENTS — RECOLLECTIONS OF JOHN F. HAGEMAN, ESQ. — ADDITIONS TO THE CHURCH.

WE are now brought to that particular event, which, in the history of Mr. Labagh's pastoral labors, may justly claim the dignity of an era. It was the great Revival at Harlingen in the year 1831. At several different periods during the previous years of his ministry in that congregation, it had pleased God to impart, in unwonted measure, a saving efficacy to the truth. The region around the Church, and indeed almost the whole of Somerset county, in which it was embraced, had been for more than a century past one of those favored localities, like ancient Hermon, or like the mountains of Zion, where "the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever more."

Digitized by Google

Sprung from the Holland stock, its early settlers brought with them the religious and educational institutions, which, ever since the Reformation, had characterized the fatherland. Wherever the emigrants established their colonies, the church and the school house arose side by side, the index of two coöperating forces, which are not less essential to the prosperity of an organized community, than to the future and eternal welfare of its individual members. With these they also brought the evangelical principles and spirit, which they had imbibed amid the sacred scenes of home, and the traditions and customs of habitual attendance upon the worship of the sanctuary, which had been handed down from parent to child. A long line of learned and faithful ministers preached to them and their descendants, from Sabbath to Sabbath, the simple doctrines of the Gospel, testifying repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And, as might be expected, God granted them, in addition to these blessings, that which was still greater, and to which the others were all only as means to an end, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of sinners from the error of their ways.

As early as 1726, we find the evidence of God's distinguishing mercy toward the people of this region, in the addition to the Churches under the care of

Digitized by Google

the Rev. Mr. Frelinghuysen,* during a single year, of thirty-eight persons on confession of their faith. To these same Churches there were again added during

* The Reformed Dutch Churches of North Branch, Raritan, Six-Mile-Run and New Brunswick.

In regard to Mr. Frelinghuysen's sermons, some of which have been published in an English translation, by the Board of Publication of the Reformed Dutch Church, Dr. Messler, in a Paper on "The Hollanders in New Jersey," prepared and read by him, before the Historical Society of that State, in 1850, remarks as follows:

"The sermons are of a high order of excellence; direct, pungent, spiritual, they aim at the heart, and effectually reach it. I doubt if they were surpassed in these characteristics by any of their day. They show that Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen was among the men of his age; few of whom, in fact, exerted a wider or more beneficial influence upon the cause of spiritual Christianity. The power, a spirit of formalizing opposition to practical godliness, which conquered Edwards at Northampton, and drove him into exile among the Indians, Frelinghuysen met at Raritan, nearly half a century earlier, and completely vanquished. This, in itself, shows what stuff there was in him."

President Edwards, in his "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," dated November 6, 1736, which he was induced to write by the interest manifested by the Rev. Drs. Watts and Guyse, and the request of the Rev. Dr. Colman, of England, refers in the following terms to the connection of the Rev. Mr. Frelinghuysen with the religious awakening in New Jersey:

"But this shower of divine blessing has been yet more extensive: there was no small degree of it in some parts of the Jerseys, as I was informed when I was at New York, (in a long journey I took at that time of the year for my health), by some people of the Jer-

Digitized by Google

the space of three years, comprising 1729, 1734, and 1739, eighty-two communicants on confession of their faith. There can be no doubt that these converts, or some of them at least, were the persons referred to by the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, in his letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince, of Boston, which the latter published in his "Christian History." The letter bears the date of August 24, 1744, and was written a little more than a year after Mr. Tennent had resigned the pastoral charge of the Church in New Brunswick, which he had held for sixteen years, to accept that of the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. The following is an extract from the letter:

"The labors of the Rev. Mr. Frelinghuysen, a Dutch Calvinist minister, were much blessed to the people of New Brunswick, and places adjacent; especially about the time of his coming among them, which was about twenty-four years ago.

"When I came there, which was about seven years

seys whom I saw, especially the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, a minister, who seemed to have such things much at heart, told me of a very great awakening of many in a place called the Mountains, under the ministry of one Mr. Cross; and of a very considerable revival of religion in another place, under the ministry of his brother, the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent; and also at another place, under the ministry of a very pious young gentleman, a Dutch minister, whose name, as I remember, was Freelinghousen."

Digitized by Google

after, I had the pleasure of seeing much of the fruits of his ministry; divers of his hearers, with whom I had the opportunity of conversing, appeared to be converted persons, by their soundness in principle, Christian experience, and pious practice; and these persons declared that the ministrations of the aforesaid gentleman were the means thereof. This, together with a kind letter which he sent me, respecting the dividing the word aright, and giving to every man his portion in due season, through the divine blessing, excited me to greater earnestness in ministerial labors."

The single Church of Raritan (Somerville) received during the years 1750 and 1751, twenty-seven members. During the four years from 1785 to 1789, the same Church received eighty-two. During the two years from 1802 to 1804, it received seventy-seven. And during the years 1821 and 1822, it received the astonishing number of three hundred and sixty-eight. Since that time, and under the ministry of its present highly esteemed pastor, the Rev. Dr. Messler, it has not only enjoyed the blessing of a continued and healthful increase, but in the years 1837 and 1838 it was visited by an extensive and powerful revival of religion which added eighty members to its communion.*

*For these statistics, see Dr. Messler's "Pastor's Memorial." 1853.

Digitized by Google

Other Churches there doubtless are in the same county, and in the same region, whose records, if they could be published to the world, would furnish a history no less marked by similar outpourings of the Divine Spirit upon the good seed of the word, and by similar harvests gathered in through the grace and to the glory of the Master. Among these the Church at Harlingen, during the ministry of Mr. Labagh, is justly entitled to be numbered. From its records we learn that on one sacramental occasion, in the year 1810, that Church received an accession of nearly twenty members on confession of their faith. A number, which, compared with the general measure of increase then enjoyed, was unusually large. Seven years of pastoral labor, of preaching and of prayer, again passed away, attended, it is true, with a gradual enlargement of the Church's membership, but with no special or striking exhibitions of religious interest. In the early part of 1817 the importance of eternal things seems to have been impressed upon the minds of the people with more than ordinary solemnity. A spirit of earnest thoughtfulness and inquiry prevaded the congregation. A larger attendance was seen at the prayer meetings, and at the church. And the word of truth was accompanied with evident power to the hearts of those who heard it. The result was, that at a single com-

Digitized by Google

munion season twenty persons were added to the Church by a profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

During all the subsequent years of his ministry Mr. Labagh was greatly encouraged in the prosecution of his labors, by the success with which, under the divine blessing, they were uniformly followed. But it was in 1831 that God honored him as His instrument in a work of grace so deep and so extensive that it shook the whole community for miles around. The impressions then made upon the hearts of those who passed through that season of spiritual revival, the scenes and the experiences which were then witnessed and felt,

> "When heaven came down their souls to greet,
> And glory crowned the mercy seat,"

remain to this day, after the lapse of more than a quarter of a century, among the sweetest and dearest recollections of the past. The tears of penitence, the faith which laid hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour of the lost, and brought the promises with all their fullness of blessing into the soul; the tenderness of Christian love, the sacred fervor of devotion, the dawning of hope and of heaven upon the eyes once closed in spiritual darkness; the psalms and hymns, the thanksgivings and prayers, offered in the social meeting, in wood and field,—these, to many

Digitized by Google

who are yet living, are as fresh and vivid as the events of yesterday. And so they will continue in the future. They will never be forgotten so long as memory endures.

As in the apostolic Church the little gathering of disciples in "an upper room," where they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," was the precursor of Pentecost with its baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, and its converts counted by thousands, so the crowded prayer meetings, and the earnest supplications which they sent up to heaven, were the harbingers of a day of prosperity and enlargement, such as the old Church at Harlingen had never before known. The good work began in the outskirts of the congregation, and traveled in toward the center. Its progress was rapid, and soon the whole mass was brought under the solemn and awakening influence of the Holy Spirit. Prayer meetings were held at private houses on almost every evening in the week. There was an unseen but mighty power hovering over the community, which came down upon the hearts of God's people, and moved them as by one common impulse. The great subjects of thought and conversation were the love of God, and the salvation of sinners. Those who had long been impenitent and careless, were aroused from the torpor of years, and constrained to cry out from

Digitized by Google

the depths of their aching hearts, "What must I do to be saved?" The religious feeling became so general, that it was deemed proper to appoint special services in the church. For three days in succession the Gospel was preached with great effect. At the close of the service, on each day, there was an invitation given to all who were anxious about their souls, to meet in the Consistory chamber, opposite the church, for the purpose of conversation. The room was crowded, and the scene one of deep and solemn interest. There were the old and the young, the worldly, the self-righteous, and the skeptic, all bowed down under a sense of sin. At these meetings Mr. Labagh presided, and gave a word in season to each inquirer.

Throughout the whole summer, the young converts, who had not yet made a profession of religion, met together, in private places, for prayer. Here would be seen standing up to call on the name of the Lord, those who but a short time before were accustomed to scoff at religion, and indulge in open profanity. Some cases of conversion were very striking. Two brothers, in the early prime and vigor of life, were plowing in the field. A neighbor said to them, as he was passing by, "Come, are you not going with us to church to-day?" One of them answered, "No; we have other work to do. Besides it will do us no

Digitized by Google

good, if we go." When strongly urged by his neighbor, he for once finally consented. He left his plow in the furrow and went to church. The truth, like an arrow, guided by the unerring Spirit, found its way into his heart. He retired from the church under the most pungent convictions of sin. So deep were his impressions, and so overwhelming was the revelation to his own soul of his condition before God, and his prospects for the eternal world, that he could not rest. For some time after, he was in a state of mind bordering almost upon insanity, until at length a new illumination of the Spirit disclosed to him the Cross of Christ. Then his burden, like that of Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress, was "loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and he saw it no more." Then again, like Christian, he looked at the Cross, and "looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks," and he went on his way, singing joyfully,

"Blest Cross! blest Sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!"

As might be expected, under such circumstances, the pastoral duties of Mr. Labagh were greatly increased. But the Master, whom he sought to honor,

Digitized by Google

gave him strength for the heavy service to which he was called.

Many of those who shared the labors, or became the subjects of the revival, have passed away from the scenes of earth, and entered upon the rest of heaven. The incidents which occurred under their own observation, the impressions made upon their own minds and hearts, and the retrospect of the whole event as it stood out before them an accomplished fact in their memory of the past, interesting and instructive, as in many cases they would doubtless be, are now numbered among the treasures of oblivion. From those who yet survive, enough has been ascertained, however, to show, that to the old Church of Harlingen, the year 1831 was a year of the right hand of the Most High.

In addition to the information derived from verbal statements, and already embodied in our narrative, a gentleman of eminent ability, who resided within the bounds of the congregation, at the time to which we refer, has furnished the following communication in regard to the revival, which presents the prominent points of its history with vividness and force. The writer is John F. Hageman, Esq., of Princeton, New Jersey, a distinguished member of the bar.

Digitized by Google

"To the Rev. J. A. Todd:

"My Dear Sir: The crowning glory of the ministry of Dr. Labagh, was the Revival of 1831, in his congregation at Harlingen. It was then and there that the Lord came down in his glory, and affixed his seal to the labors of his servant. While that merciful visitation was not ascribable, perhaps, to any specific and direct ministrations of the pastor, still, his wisdom and vigilance so guarded the use of the means of grace, as to attract the Saviour when he was passing that way.

"For many years previously had Dr. Labagh broken, to that people, the bread of life; and his labors had been useful; his Church had grown. But never, in all his ministry, had he received such precious tokens of the divine favor; nor had spiritual religion ever received such a sacred impulse in that congregation.

"That Revival inaugurated a new era in that Church. The cause of Christ then took a mighty stride onward. The church membership became active and influential. The tone of piety was deepened. Family religion was not left without a family altar. Sunday schools, which were formerly dependent upon the theological students of Princeton, now found teachers and superintendents among the hosts of those who had just come up from the valley of

Digitized by Google

dry bones. The contributions of the Church began to make a more suitable response to the various calls of charity. There was no longer any lack of men to officer the Church efficiently. Joyfully did the ark seem to glide along upon the waters, to the praise of the great Head of the Church. In a word, the Church was revived, enlarged, strengthened.

"I was quite a lad, and lived in Harlingen, when that Revival took place; yet old enough to be impressed by what I then witnessed. Nearly every fact I mention is within my own recollection; and very few of my statements are founded entirely upon the recollection of other persons. The conversion of children is a subject that receives more consideration by the Church now than it did thirty years ago.

"Children mingling in the scenes of a religious revival, are often exercised in sympathy with the awakened adult. Were I to state how my young heart was affected by that invisible power which wrought such a wonderful change in the hearts of that congregation; were I to describe my feelings, when I heard new voices of prayer from those who had never been heard to pray before, and when I saw persons, including my own kindred, in penitential tears, conversing anxiously about the salvation of their souls; were I to relate how I was impressed by the unusual earnestness of the preaching, the unusual

Digitized by Google

fervency of the prayers, the unusual solemnity and sweetness of the sacred songs, that characterized the public worship in those days; yea, more, were I to disclose, how I, at that time a little boy, just in my teens, found myself unbidden, out of doors, alone, with my little Testament in my hand, reading, weeping, praying, yet no person knowing or suspecting that I, or children like me, could be affected by the scenes around me—you would better understand how my memory can reach back some thirty years, and bring up the events of that day; and perhaps, too, you might learn not to overlook children and youth, in a revival of religion.

"The Revival followed closely after the organization of the Blawenburgh Church, which was constituted, principally, from the southern portion of the Harlingen congregation, and embraced also a portion of the Churches at Kingston and Princeton. The village of Rocky Hill, then without a church, lay between Blawenburgh and Kingston, and also contained families that belonged to Harlingen. The Rocky Hill school house stood on the confines of the three congregations, and it was occupied as a Sunday school, and for preaching alternately by the pastors of Kingston and Harlingen, and by the pastor of Blawenburgh, when that Church had one. It was, to a great extent, under the care of the theological students of

Digitized by Google

Princeton, who managed the Sabbath school, and conducted prayer meetings with great fidelity and success. The students labored in like manner at Blawenburgh, at the time of and previous to the organization of that Church.

"At that day the young men of the seminary were more zealous in doing good, in the country around Princeton, than they now are. This may be owing to the fact that now they do not receive so much encouragement from the pastors, nor from the professors, as they then did; and it may, also, be owing to the fact that the pastors are now better able to do their work themselves. * * * * *

"One of the students preached at Rocky Hill, Blawenburgh, and Cherry Valley, in the school houses, accompanied and assisted by others; and soon the Revival followed these young men from Princeton to those several school districts. Their use of the 'anxious seat' excited some opposition among the wise and prudent, but notwithstanding this, they succeeded in awakening the people; and great crowds attended their meetings, and many souls were converted through their instrumentality.

"Dr. Labagh continued to exercise a *quasi* pastoral supervision over his old parishioners at Blawenburgh, after that Church was organized. He was much beloved by them; and the magnanimity he

Digitized by Google

displayed, in fostering that new enterprise, commended him anew to their respect. He preached occasionally for them. He visited them. He gave his counsel to them, when asked. Such was his position, when the students were multiplying their prayer meetings and anxious seats, and when there was evidently an awakened state of religious feeling in that part of the country.

"While Dr. Labagh did not endorse the new measure of the anxious seat, nor stimulate the high wrought zeal of those young brethren of the seminary, he did not discard their aid, nor proscribe their labors. On the contrary, he attended their meetings, and sought to strengthen the good and counteract the evil. In this, he showed that sound and discreet judgment which was one of his prominent characteristics. By mingling with those who were thus awakened, he became himself aroused. This was evinced by his earnest exhortations and sermons—his pastoral visits from house to house, and his daily conversation among his own people at Harlingen.

"Believing that the bearing of testimony was one approved means of promoting a revival of religion, he invited the young man above mentioned, who had then just closed his course at the seminary, to preach for him in the church at Harlingen. He accepted the in-

Digitized by Google

vitation, and preached with great effect. His soul was moved within him. He impressed the fervor of his spirit upon the audience; and it seemed as if he had brought with him, from the blessed scenes of grace, the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Dr. Labagh did not fail to perceive that his people needed especial attention at this time; and he accordingly appointed frequent prayer meetings, and availed himself of the aid of several of the Princeton students, among whom, I recollect, was Mr. William M. Thomson,* afterwards missionary to Palestine. Dr. Labagh felt that he was not able to do all the preaching and other pastoral labor that was demanded by the state of things then pressing him, and he fortunately secured the assistance of the Rev. J. F. Schermerhorn, and appointed a series of public meetings for preaching, in the church and school houses in the congregation—then called a 'protracted meeting.'

"Mr. Schermerhorn was a plain, practical, pointed, earnest preacher; of good personal appearance, in the vigor of life, and well calculated to impress such a congregation. He had been employed under President Jackson, among the Indians, and his style of address was manly and practical. His name has a

* Author of the excellent and popular work lately published entitled "The Land and the Book."

Digitized by Google

sweet savor to this day in that congregation. It was in the early part of May, when the protracted meeting was held. Farmers were unusually busy in preparing to plant. But the plow stood still; and men who had before never evinced any interest in personal religion, repaired to the church, and attended to the breaking up of the fallow ground of their own hearts. The week day was as solemn as the Sabbath. I can call to mind several different texts from which Mr. Schermerhorn preached with great power. One was in Micah 6: 6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' The parable of the lost sheep was the theme of another pungent discourse. But the most overpowering appeal of all his sermons, and probably the third one he preached there, was from the words of Isaiah 55: 1. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.' This sermon brought the people to their knees as if they had been shot. The impassioned appeal was irresistible. The great con-

Digitized by Google

gregation bowed like the cedars of Lebanon before the storm. Oh, what a spectacle! a crowded house in tears! 'Strong men unmanned, trembling with fear! Whole families awakening to a sense of eternal things! Parents and children staring at each others' mysterious sobbings, no longer able to conceal the anguish of their troubled souls!

"Dr. Labagh thus found himself in the midst of a work that seemed to require an angel's strength and wisdom to conduct it to a happy issue. Trusting in the promises of his Divine Master, he buckled on the armor and went forward with a well regulated zeal, and a sound mind. He visited his people from house to house. He dealt gently and judiciously with such as were convicted of sin. He encouraged the timid believer. He instructed those that were feeling their way in the dark. He held prayer meetings in private houses, and in school houses, and in the church. His labors were incessant. He received assistance from the neighboring clergy, who preached for him with great acceptance.

"Refreshing and delightful as such a work of grace must be to the soul of a minister, it nevertheless imposes upon him new and more arduous duties. His hearers are no longer the half-dead-and-alive hearers they formerly were. They are now inquirers for the truth, searchers of the Scriptures;

Digitized by Google

they are looking into mysteries which angels desire to look into. Their faith is not settled. In Christian experience they are but babes. Now, to keep their new born zeal from plunging them into error; to settle their faith on the sure word of God; to reconcile in their minds the doctrine of faith and good works and other fundamental doctrines; to see that their faces are set, properly, Zionward, and that they run well; demands the highest order of ministerial labor and pastoral vigilance, for years after conversion.

"In all this, Dr. Labagh proved himself 'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.' I have mentioned in the beginning of my letter, what a new aspect this Revival gave to that community. The records will give you the number of those who were then added to the Church, but the fruits of that revival were seen for years after that time.

As Dr. Labagh's long and useful ministry was identified with the Church at Harlingen, and a minute of his labors occupies so large a portion of the records of that Church, I may add that his memory should be cherished by that congregation and kept perpetually green. * * * *

"Yours respectfully,

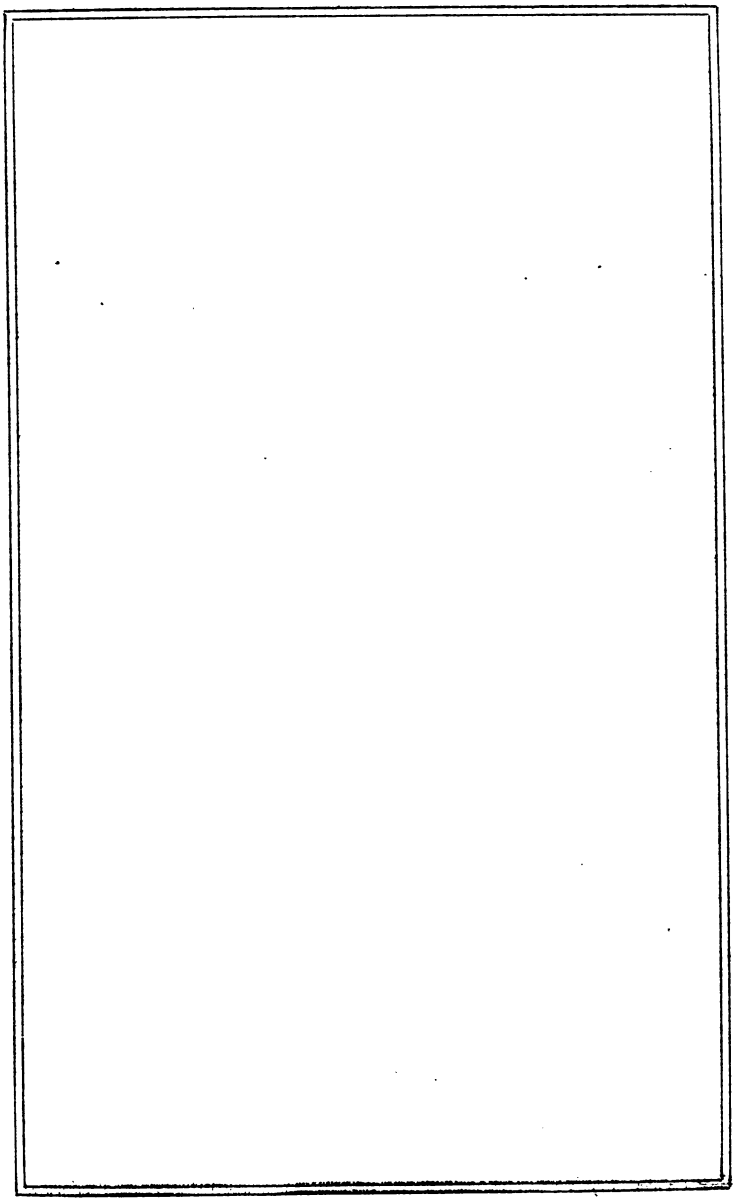
"JOHN F. HAGEMAN.

"*Princeton, May* 9, 1859."

Digitized by Google

While the fruits of the Revival were clearly seen in the awakened spirit of devotion, and the increased activity of the Church, in every good work, they were no less apparent in the augmented ranks of its membership. Within the year, one hundred and eight persons were received into full communion. At the celebration of the Lord's Supper in August, 1831, sixty-four members were added on confession of their faith. Of these, fourteen were husbands and wives, who came together to cast in their lot with the people of God, and three others, at least, who were husbands and heads of families, were at the next communion joined by their wives. Among those who were received into the Church, were a number of young men whose subsequent lives have given abundant testimony to the genuineness of their conversion. Some of them have frequently rendered active and efficient service to the cause of Christ, as elders and deacons in the Consistories of Harlingen, and the other Churches, which have since been organized at Blawenburgh, Griggstown, and Rocky Hill.

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

New Churches formed out of the Harlingen Congregation — Church of Blawenburgh — Account of its organization — Call and settlement of a Minister — Mr. Labagh's charge to the Pastor at his Installation — Church of Griggstown — Causes which led to its organization — Mr. Labagh's advancing age — Resigns his Pastoral office — Joint application of Minister and Consistory to Classis — The application granted — Resolutions of Classis — Call of a successor to the Church of Harlingen — Mr. Labagh's Farewell Sermon to the Congregation — Solemn scenes and reflections.

During the active ministry of Mr. Labagh, two new Churches, composed in a large measure of members from the old Harlingen Church, were constituted respectively on the south western, and on the eastern borders of the congregation. The first of these was the Church at Blawenburgh, on the south west. The earliest record of a movement for the formation of this Church is found in the minutes of the Harlingen Consistory. It is there stated, that on the first of October, 1829, an application was made by fifty-four

Digitized by Google

persons, residing in the district of Blawenburgh and vicinity, for permission to erect a house for public worship, to be denominated the Second Reformed Dutch Church of Harlingen. A subscription was also presented, from which it appeared that nearly three thousand dollars had already been pledged for that purpose. The Consistory, having considered the matter, unanimously resolved to approve the object of the applicants, and expressed their willingness, when requested, to take such action as would have a direct tendency to accomplish so laudable a measure. The work was accordingly commenced, and prosecuted with considerable vigor.

In the spring of 1831 the edifice was completed, and on Saturday, the fourteenth of May, the Rev. Philip Milledollar, D.D., Professor of Theology at New Brunswick, by invitation of the Consistory, preached an appropriate sermon, and solemnly dedicated the house of worship to the service of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Church remained in connection with Harlingen until March, 1832. On the second of that month, a committee, consisting of the Rev. Mr. Labagh, and the elder, Abraham Skillman, attended at Blawenburgh, where, after earnest supplication to the throne of grace for the divine presence and blessing, a separate and distinct Church was regularly organized, a Consistory

Digitized by Google

chosen, and arrangements made for their ordination. Since that time the Church has been known as the Reformed Dutch Church of Blawenburgh. At its organization it was composed of about eighty members, received on certificate from the old Church at Harlingen.

The people of Blawenburgh soon united in calling as their minister the Rev. Henry Heermance.* He accepted the call, and at his installation, September 15, 1832, Mr. Labagh was invited to deliver the charge to the pastor. He performed, with great acceptance, the duty assigned him. His charge to the brother who had just assumed the spiritual care of those who had so long sat under his own ministry, and had found it the channel of saving mercy to their souls, was full of wisdom and full of kindness. It was a model of blended simplicity and force, of faithfulness and love. It was fortunately found among his papers, after his death, and is here presented to the reader:

* It was at first intended to establish a collegiate relation between the old Church at Harlingen and its offshoot at Blawenburgh, and to call another minister as the colleague of Mr. Labagh. It is stated in the Harlingen records that the Consistories of the two Churches met at Harlingen, August 15, 1831, and "unanimously resolved that the congregations should remain united, and that another minister be called as soon as possible, and that, when called and settled, he should exchange services with Mr. Labagh every third Sabbath." This resolution was never carried into effect.

Digitized by Google

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: You are now, by the act of the Classis of Philadelphia, constituted pastor of this Church and congregation. The relation which has now been approved and sanctioned, by the ecclesiastical judicatory under which we stand, is one solemn, interesting, and highly responsible. Much of your comfort and happiness, as well as the happiness and prosperity of your charge may be involved in this connection. You are their teacher, to instruct them in the all-important truths of the Gospel. You are their pastor, to feed them with knowledge, and to lead them to the only source of true consolation and peace. You are their watchman, to sound the alarm to sinners, to warn of impending danger, and to point out to saints their various enemies. You are their leader, to go before them in every Christian duty and virtue. And, with all your official titles, you must not forget that you are their servant, to labor for them, and to minister unto them, in holy things. For the faithful performance of all these duties, you are accountable to your Consistory and to the higher authorities of the Church, and you must render a final account to Him who is your Master and your Judge. These considerations, connected with your official duties, are calculated to produce a deep feeling of heart, and a humbling sense of one's own insufficiency. Were you to rely for success, in

Digitized by Google

this your office, altogether upon your own resources, we should pity you, but much more would we pity your people. We trust you feel your dependence upon the Spirit of your Master for every needful qualification to ensure success.

"In performing the service assigned me for this occasion, I shall address you in some remarks on the duties relating to yourself, to your people, and to the Church at large.

"When instructing Timothy in the various duties of the ministerial office, Paul forgets not to charge him, Take heed to thyself. To drink deep into the spirit of our divine Master, and to cherish and manifest the graces of His holy religion, are all-important to make your ministrations pleasant to yourself, and profitable to your people. The good shepherd goeth before the sheep, and they follow him. In every Christian duty, and in every Christian virtue, the Christian minister is bound to set the example. The people expect it of him, and have a right so to expect. And more than this, where the Christian minister is habitually deficient in a Christian example, the people have a right to suspect his sincerity. You will need to have a constant watch over your own heart, and to have your spirit as much as possible in subjection to the law of Christ. For if a man, says the Apostle, know not how to rule his own house, and

Digitized by Google

consequently his own heart, how shall he take care of the Church of God? There is little prospect of success in the labors of that minister, who indeed preaches the Gospel, but is ignorant of its power.

"My dear brother, in the various and often difficult duties of your office, you will frequently find occasion for all your personal religion, and will sigh for more. In contending against internal and external foes, you will have need of the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. All these parts of the Christian panoply you will need for the faithful and successful discharge of your duty, but while you are cultivating the spirit and the graces of piety, oh! forget not the throne of grace. Be emphatically a man of prayer. Let your closet bear witness to your sighs, and tears, and wrestlings with God. Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright, while it animates him in the conflict, and encourages with the hope of success. Without constant intercourse with heaven your heart will

Digitized by Google

not be in your work, and your whole service will sink into a dull, monotonous round.

"Your next duty relates to your flock. The apostle Peter charges every gospel minister: Feed the flock of Christ, which is among you. This duty consists in preaching, catechising youth, administering ordinances, exercising discipline, and family visitation.

"In your preaching be careful to maintain sound doctrine. The Lord has commanded that the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and that they should seek the law at His mouth. And an apostle declares that the inspired Volume is profitable for doctrine. Our pious and learned forefathers, sensible of the importance of doctrinal preaching to the prosperity of the Church, have incorporated in their standards an excellent summary of doctrinal truths, and made it indispensable that all the ministry explain a portion of these on stated occasions. With this injunction we trust you will conscientiously comply. Rest assured when doctrinal preaching becomes unfashionable in the Church, her purity and her prosperity will not long continue. Practical preaching is not less important. All the great doctrines of the Gospel involve corresponding duties. These are to be faithfully presented, and pressed upon the consciences of your hearers. In short, preach the Gospel, preach the law, comfort the saint, alarm the sinner, direct

Digitized by Google

the inquiring soul, arouse the careless sleeper, pour the oil and the wine into the wounded spirit, and pierce with the arrows of conviction the bold offender. Speak in gentle accents words of peace to the contrite soul, but come in all the thunders of Sinai to the hardened sinner. And whether you instruct or exhort, whether you approve or censure, whether you comfort or alarm, endeavor to convince all that you are their friend, and ardently seek to promote their best and eternal interests.

"Another portion of your charge claims your special regard, the lambs of the flock, the children of the Church. The relation they sustain to the Church entitles them to her parental care and solicitude. If the great Head of the Church could take them in His arms and bless them, how can the Church herself disown and reject them? Be it your business and delight, my brother, early to attempt to imbue their minds with Christian principles, and to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Give them your paternal affection and care, furnish them with suitable instruction, and often carry them in your heart to a throne of grace. Of so great importance does the Church consider catechetical instruction to the youth, that, by her constitution, a minister is liable to suspension from office who wilfully and habitually neglects it.

Digitized by Google

"The administration of ordinances, and the exercise of church discipline are nearly connected. Both require prudence, discretion, tenderness and faithfulness. Were we more cautious in admitting into the Church, we should have less trouble in excluding from it. But when carnal policy enters the Church, and controls principle, we are laying the foundation for future difficulties. It would be well for us all to remember, that the prosperity and piety of a Church are not to be measured or calculated by the number of communicants alone, but by the character, the lives and the godly conversation of its members. To you and your consistory are committed the keys of the kingdom. Use them tenderly, yet faithfully. Admit to your communion and fellowship such only as give evidence of a Christian spirit. Bear patiently with the weak. Be never hasty in the exercise of discipline. Let your moderation appear unto all men. But when the interests of truth and piety require it, never be afraid to do your duty.

"In your pastoral visits you have an opportunity to become more intimately acquainted with the state of your flock. You will know better what subjects to select in your preaching, and how to treat them. A word in season here is often spoken, and the mind of a Christian friend relieved of a burden. Difficulties are met and solved, and growing animosities some-

Digitized by Google

times happily reconciled. In performing this delicate duty your faithfulness, your prudence and your wisdom, may often be put to trial. It is a wise regulation that associates an elder with the minister on such occasions. In all your intercourse with your people, endeavor to manifest a truly Christian spirit. Be affable, and kind, and gentle. Be accessible to all, both rich and poor. Convince them by satisfactory evidence that you are entirely above a mercenary spirit. Let them see that in accepting this charge you seek not theirs, but them, and that in all things you desire to promote their interest and welfare. This conduct will gain their full confidence, and enable you to exercise a salutary influence over them. Look upon this flock as yours, and probably for life. Endeavor to feel as if with this people you are to live and die. This we conceive to be a duty, and such feelings have a beneficial tendency. They will increase your attachment, and you will take a deeper interest in all their concerns. Whereas to cherish an unsettled mind, and to indulge the feeling that your residence here will probably be short, that you will soon change your location, and be called to labor in some other part of the vineyard, will have a strong tendency to dampen your zeal, restrain your efforts in their service, and diminish your interest in their welfare.

Digitized by Google

"In discharging your duties to the Church at large, permit me earnestly to recommend a punctual attendance upon the judicatories of the Church. Let no slight excuse prevent you. Look upon it as a solemn duty to be always at the post of your appointment. There are too many ministers who take but little interest in the general concerns of the Church. They appear to feel as if all their duties and all their efforts were to be confined to the people of their charge. If all were so, what would be the consequence? The elder brethren will soon be removed from their places. The younger will be called to occupy them. How necessary, then, that they should qualify themselves for duties which may soon be assigned them! Be always ready, with your counsel and assistance, to accomplish the objects which the Church contemplates. Give your heart and hand particularly to the benevolent operations of the day, and seek, by your charity and Christian enterprise, to excite a similar spirit among your people.

"Finally, cultivate and manifest fraternal affection and confidence toward your brethren in the ministry. We offer you the hand of brotherhood. We welcome you into our ecclesiastical community. We tender to you our confidence and love, and will cheerfully coöperate with you in all things that relate to the good of our beloved Zion.

Digitized by Google

"May the connection now confirmed prove a blessing to you and to your flock! May you long be a successful laborer in this vineyard! May you gather much fruit! And may your final reward be a crown of glory that fadeth not away!"

The other Church organized during the ministry of Mr. Labagh, was the Reformed Dutch Church of Griggstown. The village of Griggstown, in which the church edifice stands, is situated on the eastern bank of the Millstone river, with Harlingen about four miles to the west, and at a distance of six miles, respectively, from the villages of Millstone on the north, of Six-Mile-Run on the east, and of Kingston on the south. The country adjacent is productive and thickly settled by a community of intelligent and thrifty farmers. For several years prior to the organization, the people of the district had felt the necessity of having a Church established at some more convenient point. And as the village of Griggstown formed the center of a circle about ten miles in diameter, within which there was no house exclusively devoted to the purposes of public worship, it was designated by its geographical position as a desirable location for a new church. It was indeed customary for the pastors of the neighboring Churches to lecture occasionally, on the afternoon of the Sab-

Digitized by Google

bath, in the school house on the western bank of the river, and at intervals, during the week, to assemble the children there for the purpose of catechetical and biblical instruction. A weekly prayer meeting had also been maintained there by the people, without interruption, for more than a hundred years.

But while these services were highly appreciated, they did not meet and satisfy the public want. The desire of the community at length ripened into effort, and on June 21, 1842, a Church was constituted by the Classis of New Brunswick, and measures were adopted by the congregation for the erection of a house of worship. Among the members received into the new organization there were some from all the neighboring Churches, but the old Church at Harlingen contributed a larger proportion than any of the others. About twenty persons were received on certificate from that Church.

The membership of the Church at Griggstown was originally small, being only thirty-eight in number at the organization, but it has passed the period of its infancy, and has attained to a vigorous and active youth. It now reports more than one hundred and thirty communicants.

In 1844, about two years after the organization of the Church at Griggstown, Mr. Labagh came to the conclusion, after serious reflection and prayer, and in

Digitized by Google

view of the increasing infirmities of age, to resign his pastoral charge. Already he had nearly completed the forty-eighth year of his ministry, and the thirty-fifth of his connection with the Harlingen Church. The toils of a life protracted beyond three-score years and ten, and the inexorable hand of time, had left their impression upon his physical frame and vigor. And he began to agitate the inquiry in his own mind, whether the period had not arrived when it would be best for him to resign the cares and responsibilities of his office. Not that he shrunk from the self-denial and labor, which, in the very nature of the case, were inseparable from his position, as they are from the position of every conscientious pastor; for no one was ever more willing to stand in the lot in which Providence had placed him, whatever that lot might be, and there to fill up, humbly and faithfully as he might, his appointed measure of service. But he thought he perceived in his diminished, and still diminishing energy of body and power of endurance, and especially in the partial failure of his voice, an intimation of the will of God, which made the path of duty plain and straight before him.

The old soldier of the Cross had followed his Captain through years of conflict and struggle. He had contended with courage and patience for the honor of His cross and crown, and for the advancement of

Digitized by Google

that glorious "kingdom which cannot be moved." From many a well-fought field he had borne away the trophies of victory, and laid them at his Master's feet. And now, covered with the dust of the march and the battle, and gray with half a century of service, the Master gave him permission to retire from the field, till He should call him up to occupy a throne, and wear a crown of glory, in the heavens.

Acting under a sense of duty, Mr. Labagh called his Consistory together, and laid his resolution before them. To his request that they would unite with him in soliciting from the Classis a dissolution of the pastoral relation, they gave their consent. A meeting for the purpose of taking formal action was accordingly appointed. In compliance with the rule of the constitution, a neighboring minister, the Rev. James R. Talmage, then pastor of the Church at Blawenburgh, was invited to be present and to preside. The meeting took place on the third of April, 1844. After the members had united in prayer, Mr. Labagh formally renewed his request, and gave, as his reasons for so doing, "his advanced age and growing infirmities, especially the failure of his voice." The following resolutions were then unanimously adopted:

"*Resolved*, That the Consistory consent, for the above reasons, to the dissolution of the pastoral rela-

Digitized by Google

tion, and do unite with the pastor in application to the Classis for the same.

"*Resolved*, That the Consistory feel bound to record their testimony to the faithfulness with which their pastor has for these many years, discharged the duties of his office, and their earnest prayer to God that he may enjoy abundantly in his own soul the consolations of that Gospel which he has preached to us, and that his latter end may be peace."

The resolutions were signed by the President, the Rev. Mr. Talmage, and entered upon the minutes of the Consistory.

At the meeting of the Classis of Philadephia, which took place on the ensuing week, the joint application was presented. The action of the Classis was deferred, however, until its next meeting, which was held at Trenton, New Jersey, May 14, 1844, when the following resolutions were adopted:

"*Resolved*, That in compliance with the joint request of the Rev. Peter Labagh and the Consistory of the Reformed Dutch Church of Harlingen, for a dissolution of the pastoral relation which so long, and by the blessing of God, so profitably has subsisted between them, the same be and hereby is dissolved.

"*Resolved*, That while Classis accede to this request, they respectfully recommend that the Church

Digitized by Google

in Harlingen still remember affectionately him who has so long and so faithfully labored among them in the holy ministry, that they still do what they can to promote the peace and happiness of this venerable and beloved father in his declining years, and that such a relation may be established between them as will show their respect and affection for their beloved minister, and set a proper example to other Churches in similar circumstances."

During the summer, while the pulpit was vacant, Mr. Labagh continued, as before, to feel a deep interest in the Church and congregation, and cheerfully undertook any service which the exigencies of their situation might require. After hearing a number of clergymen, who had been invited to preach by the Consistory, the congregation assembled, pursuant to notice, on the twenty-first of August, and cordially united in calling as their pastor, the Rev. John Gardner, who had then but recently completed his course of study in the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick. Mr. Gardner accepted their call, and, on Thursday, November 14, 1844, was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, and installed pastor of the Church, an office which he still continues to fill.

Mr. Labagh, though no longer sustaining an official

Digitized by Google

relation to the Church, exercised, during the interval between the call and the installation of his successor, what might be described as a pastoral supervision. On the Sabbath preceding the installation of the pastor elect, he addressed the congregation in a sermon of deep solemnity, and bade them an affectionate farewell.

He took for his text, the passage in the Revelation of John, 22: 21, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." They are the closing words of the sacred canon, and they suggested a fitting theme for the discourse with which the venerable servant of Christ completed his pastoral career. A career which, in its spirit of simplicity and love, bore no slight resemblance to that of the Apostle, by whom the Holy Ghost spake to the Church from Patmos.

After endeavoring to unfold the full import of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," exhibiting its infinite value to a race of condemned and dying sinners, and illustrating the scope and compass of the Apostle's benediction, as extending to "all," he concluded with a concise history of the Church, and a few parting words of interest and affection. He spoke very nearly as follows:

"The Reformed Dutch Church of Harlingen was or-

Digitized by Google

ganized in 1727,* and was supplied occasionally by ministers from Long Island and New York. From the former the inhabitants composing the congregation had generally removed. The first church edifice was erected in a corner of the grave-yard on the parsonage farm, nearly two miles north of the building in which we are now assembled. The present house of worship was erected in 1804. The Church was without a stated ministry until 1750, when the Rev. Johannes Frelinghuysen was called to labor here every fifth Sabbath. He supplied the whole county, and also the Church of Readington, now in the adjoining county of Hunterdon. He was a burning and a shining light. His ministry was brief, but very successful. Many were added to the Church, and the fruits of his labors were long visible. He died in

* While this statement is entirely correct, it is proper to add, that so early as June, 1710, a tract of one hundred and sixty acres of land had, by deed, been set apart "for the benefit and behoof of the Minister and Consistory of a Church to be gathered there, upon the basis of the Confession of Faith adopted by the Synod of Dort in 1618 and 1619." It was not till May 18, 1727, however, that the Church was organized by Dominie Henricus Coens, "a minister from Aquecknonk, &c., after calling upon the name of the blessed Jehovah." The persons chosen as officers of the Church, "Op De Millston," as it was styled in the Dutch records, were Abraham Reyters and Gerbrant Peterse, for Elders; and Johannes Koelbag and Resolvert Waldron, for Deacons.

Digitized by Google

1754, and from that time the Church had only occasional supplies, until about the year 1762, when the Rev. Johannes Martenus Van Harlingen, a native of Millstone, having received his theological education in one of the universities of Holland, and his license from the Classis of Amsterdam, returned to his native country, and was called and settled here. He appears to have been a faithful and devoted man, but he was able to officiate only in the Dutch language, the effect of which was felt to be unfavorable to the Church. Those who preferred instruction in the English language resorted to other Churches. This was the case especially with the younger portion of the congregation.

"A remedy against the evil was provided when the Rev. William R. Smith was called, in 1794, from the Presbyterian Church at Wilmington, Delaware, to officiate as co-pastor. He preached here every third Sabbath, the two others being devoted to Shannock, which had some time previously formed a collegiate connection with this Church on condition of having one third of the services of Mr. Van Harlingen. In 1795, Mr. Van Harlingen died, after having labored in the Church as its pastor for thirty-three years.

"His successor was the Rev. Henry Polhemus, who was installed as pastor of this Church, in con-

Digitized by Google

nection with that of Shannock, in 1798. After a laborious and successful ministry of ten years, he asked and received his dismission in 1808. In July, 1809, the labors of the preacher (the Rev. Peter Labagh) commenced in this Church, in connection with the Rev. Mr. Smith of Shannock. At the time of his settlement, the Church consisted of about sixty members, and the congregation embraced the whole of what is now the congregation of Blawenburgh. Of these sixty, only seven remain. The rest have all gone to their account.

"In 1820, the Rev. Mr. Smith departed this life. He had been disabled, by a paralytic affection, from discharging his ministerial duties for several years previous to his death. He had labored in this vineyard of the Lord for a quarter of a century, through many infirmities of body, and with a shattered constitution, yet not without success.

"After his death, the congregations dissolved their connection, and the services of the preacher (Mr. Labagh) were confined to this people. Under his ministrations the Church experienced several revivals of religion. In 1810, not long after his settlement, nearly twenty were added to the Church at one communion, at that time an unusual number; and in 1817, as many more. But in 1831, in common with may other Churches in this region, there was here a

Digitized by Google

powerful and extensive revival, which resulted in the addition of one hundred and eight members within one year. In 1832, about eighty members were dismissed, to constitute the Church at Blawenburgh, and in 1842, about twenty to the Church organized at Griggstown.

"To the precious revival enjoyed in 1831, has succeeded a long season of coldness and formality. The Church may well mourn, and she ought fervently to pray,

'Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast.'

It is proper that she should be reminded that she is about to enter into a new ecclesiastical relation, and that her youthful pastor will need all her counsel, her prayers, and her active coöperation.

"And now, my Christian friends, and beloved," continued the venerable patriarch, "I stand before you to-day, for the last time as your pastor. In this relation you will see my face and hear my voice no more. The duties and responsibilities of the office will rest upon another, and he the man of your choice. This is my birth-day. I now enter upon my seventy-second year. For more than thirty-five years, I have ministered to this Church and congre-

Digitized by Google

gation; a longer term than any of my predecessors.

"In reviewing my ministerial life, I am very conscious that I have nothing to boast of. I have often shuddered in view of the responsibilities under which I have stood. If to any of you, my labors have been blessed; if I have been instrumental in your salvation, give the glory and the praise to God. Of one thing I am confident, that it has been my wish and endeavor to minister to your spiritual and eternal interests. And although I feel that I have labored among you in much weakness and imperfection, yet I rejoice to know that I have not labored in vain. God has given me a measure of success that has often filled me with gratitude and joy. During the term of my ministry, more than five hundred persons have been added to the church membership, and I know of no country Church which has furnished to the cause of Christ so large a number of ministers, amounting at least to eight.

"For some years past I have felt a deeper interest in the young people of my charge, and have been anxious to train them up in doctrinal and biblical knowledge. It has been among my sweetest pleasures to see so many of the youth seeking to excel in these attainments, punctual in attendance, and well prepared with their recitations. Their progress,

Digitized by Google

flattering to their pastor, was more honorable, and we hope will prove beneficial to themselves. I cannot omit to mention that at our last sacramental occasion, the eleven who were received upon confession of their faith, were all young, and of those who had been trained in the bible class.

"Feeling sensibly the growing infirmities of age, the failure of physical powers, but especially the failure of my voice, I cheerfully united with the Consistory in asking a dissolution of the connection so long and so happily subsisting between us. But although this is now effectuated, I expect to remain in the place, to worship here, and here to mingle my dust with the dust of those with whom I have long been associated.

"And now, dear brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace. While I live, I shall feel a deep interest in the welfare of your Church, and shall not cease to pray, Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

The occasion was one of solemn recollections, and deep feeling. On that day the aged minister completed his seventy-first year. He had reached, and over-past, the utmost general limit of human life.

Digitized by Google

The circle of his earthly existence and labors was drawing to a close. In the pulpit where he had stood in the ardor of youth, and in the strength of manhood, he now stood in the feebleness of age. More than seventy winters had whitened the locks upon his brow, the vigor had departed from his arm, and the steady brightness from his eye, but in his breast there was something which neither time nor infirmity could touch. There was a heart there which glowed as warmly with love to Christ, and love to human kind, as on the day of its first espousals. "While the outward man perished, the inward man was renewed day by day."

There, too, were the Church and congregation. The same, and yet not the same. There was the old house of worship, bearing its old historic name. There were the venerable trees at its entrance, under whose shadow children and children's children had passed, as they entered into its sacred inclosure. The same sun looked down from heaven, and the same mountain side and plain lay reposing on the right hand and the left, in the solemn stillness of the Sabbath. But within the scene was changed. The pews were indeed filled, but not by those who, with open arms of welcome, had first received him. One by one, like the sands of the hour-glass, they had passed away, and another generation had risen up to take

Digitized by Google

their places. Of all those who had gathered around the sacramental board, when he first gave to them the emblems of a Saviour's broken body and shed blood, only seven now remained, and they looked forward from that scene of parting with the expectation of a speedy reünion in heaven.

It is no wonder that a person who was present described the day as "a day of sorrowing to many, but especially to the aged. They remembered how constantly the venerated servant of God had been associated in all their solemn joys and duties. He had welcomed them into the Church. He had baptized their children. He had married them, and their children after them. He had buried their parents, their children and their neighbors. And he had unceasingly urged them to activity and progress in the divine life. And now, they sorrowed that, in all these relations, they should behold his face no more."

A blessed privilege it is for a minister of Christ, when sinking beneath the burden of toil and years, to close his career amid scenes and under circumstances like these! To carry from the pulpit and the sanctuary the love and benedictions of a grateful people, showered upon him by the mingled voices of lisping childhood and tottering age! Truly did the wise man say: "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness!"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Labagh takes up his Residence with his Son-in-Law and Daughter — Employments and Diversions — Punctuality at Church—Prayer Meetings and Sabbath Schools—Receives the Degree of Doctor of Divinity—Ministerial Labors—Collects Funds for Rutgers College in 1845—Ecclesiastical Meetings—Officiates at an Ordination—Attends Divine Worship at Griggstown—Regard for him—Anecdote—An Interesting Day—Dr. Cannon—Difficulty in finding his Text—Pleasant Relations between Drs. Labagh and Cannon—Decline and Death of Dr. Cannon—Dr. Labagh at his Funeral—*Note:* Some Account of Dr. Cannon's Life—Dr. Labagh anticipates his Departure—Family Worship—Sickness and Death—His Funeral—*Note:* Subsequent Removal of his Remains to Rocky Hill—Reflections.

Shortly after his demission of the pastoral office, Mr. Labagh, together with his aged companion, took up his residence with his son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Van Derveer, at Brookside, the old homestead of the Van Derveer family, about equi-distant from the neighboring villages of Harlingen, Griggstown and Rocky Hill. In this quiet and

Digitized by Google

beautiful retreat, cherished by affectionate children, and revered by the whole community, he spent the remainder of his days. Fond of books, and scarcely less fond of that employment so strongly recommended by good old Izaak Walton, he would often be found, during the pleasant hours of summer, seated in the shade of the majestic trees that surround the mansion, and perusing a volume of history or travels, of theology or polite literature, or upon the bank of the stream hard-by, holding the line and waiting to draw from the liquid element below the reward of his skill and patience.

The Sabbath always found him in his place at the house of God. The bell was scarcely more regular in its call to worship, than was the good old man in his compliance with the summons. To those who knew him, his presence in the sanctuary was a sermon, and to all who beheld him there, his conduct was an example. He always bowed, in prayer, with the reverence of a child, and whoever the preacher might be, he gave him his undivided attention. His fondness for music amounted almost to a passion, and when the hymn had been announced, and the congregation began to sing, for the congregation *did* sing, he joined in, and sang heartily "with the spirit, and with the understanding also."

The evening prayer meetings he was seldom able

Digitized by Google

to attend, in consequence of the infirmities of age. But at those which were sometimes held on Sabbath afternoons, in a private dwelling, or in what was called the Bedensville school house, about half a mile from his residence, when it was the turn for the minister to lecture in some other district of the congregation, he was always present, if circumstances would permit.

In the Sabbath school and the catechetical class he took great delight. Affable and sprightly, and, at the same time, reverent and thoroughly informed in biblical and theological knowledge, he felt himself, on such occasions, peculiarly at home; and the young people were no less delighted to see him. He had a faculty of investing these exercises with interest, and of imparting religious truth and impressions by means of them, which few men have more largely possessed. As a teacher of scriptural doctrine he greatly excelled.

At the annual commencement, in September, 1846, the Board of Trustees of Marshall College, at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity; and if that title be held to designate a Teacher of *Theology*, it has seldom been more worthily conferred. For such he truly was.

Dr. Labagh, while enjoying his exemption from

Digitized by Google

pastoral care, was not idle. For a short time, in 1845, he employed himself in collecting funds for Rutgers College. He visited, for that purpose, a number of Churches in New Jersey, and also a few of those in New York, which were most convenient of access from the Hudson river. With this exception, he very seldom, if ever, in his later years, undertook any labor which required him to travel far, or to be absent long from his family. Within the sphere to which the efforts of his old age were necessarily confined, he loved to be engaged in doing what he could for the prosperity of the Church. He was always ready to lend a helping hand to every good cause. At Rocky Hill, which was situated on the borders of four different congregations, and where no Church had as yet been organized, there was a union chapel, in which the neighboring pastors were accustomed, on Sabbath afternoons, to lecture in turn; and Dr. Labagh took his turn with them. He occasionally preached also in the Churches located in the vicinity, sometimes when the pulpits were vacant, and sometimes to relieve a ministerial brother, whom the pressure of labors during the week, had reduced to a condition of distress in view of the Sabbath.

He took great pleasure in attending the various ecclesiastical meetings, and others of a religious nature. At the annual gatherings of the Somerset

Digitized by Google

County Bible Society, whether near or distant, he was, if his health and circumstances allowed, invariably present, and also at the semi-annual meetings of Classis. The part he performed on one such occasion, at least, the writer of these pages has every reason to remember.

That occasion was the meeting of the Classis of New Brunswick, in the Reformed Dutch Church of Griggstown, on Tuesday, September 26, 1848, to ordain a young man to the work of the ministry, and to install him as pastor of that Church. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Talbot W. Chambers, D.D., then pastor of the Second Reformed Dutch Church of Raritan, New Jersey, but now junior pastor of the Collegiate Dutch Church in New York city, from Galatians 4: 19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Though a member of the Classis of Philadelphia, Dr. Labagh was invited by the Classis of New Brunswick to preside at the exercises, to read the form of ordination, and to offer the ordaining prayer. The writer was the person to be ordained. And while memory lasts, he will never forget that solemn moment, when, kneeling in the vacant space before the pulpit, Dr. Labagh laid his hand upon his head, accompanied in the act by the clergymen present, fourteen in number, and, amid the breathless stillness of the as-

Digitized by Google

sembly, slowly but fervently pronounced the impressive words:

"God, our heavenly Father, who hath called thee to this holy ministry, enlighten thee with his Holy Spirit, strengthen thee with his hand, and so govern thee in thy ministry that thou mayest decently and fruitfully walk therein, to the glory of his name and the propagation of the kingdom of his Son, Jesus Christ. Amen."

The Rev. Abraham Messler, D.D., of the First Church of Raritan, delivered the charge to the pastor, and the Rev. Samuel A. Van Vranken, D.D., Professor in the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, delivered the charge to the people.

At the conclusion of the exercises the writer stood by the side of Dr. Labagh, and for the first time, as the bishop of a church, and a scripturally commissioned minister of Christ, pronounced the apostolic benediction. Were he to forget such a scene, and such associations, his memory would be treacherous indeed.

In the year 1851, Dr. Labagh, while cherishing, as he had ever done, the most cordial sentiments of regard for both the people and pastor of his late charge at Harlington, was induced, by the double consideration of convenience and duty, to become a regular

Digitized by Google

attendant of the Church at Griggstown. In this action he was joined by his son-in-law and family, with whom he lived. Many of the people at Griggstown had formerly been his parishioners. Almost all the Elders and Deacons of the Church there, had been brought up under his ministry, and trained for usefulness by him in the catechetical class and the Bible recitation. When he came among them, therefore, he was no stranger to them, nor they to him. He seemed more like a father among his children, for he loved them heartily, and they returned his affection in measure by no means small.

An incident which occurred within the writer's knowledge will illustrate the warmth of their regard. Dr. Labagh had occasionally attended divine service at the Church of Griggstown, before he made it his ecclesiastical home. On one occasion, when Dr. Cannon, of the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, came up to make a visit at Griggstown, and supply the pulpit on the Sabbath, Dr. Labagh was notified of his coming, and invited to meet his old friend and fellow-student, and hear him preach. As most of the congregation had formerly sat under the ministry either of Dr. Cannon, at Six-Mile-Run, or of Dr. Labagh, at Harlingen, they were both well known, and were held in about equal estimation. On Sabbath morning they proceeded to the Church, and

Digitized by Google

the people had no sooner caught sight of them, as they entered the vestibule, than one of the Elders, a very intelligent and worthy man, unable to restrain his emotions, burst forth with the exclamation, addressed to his neighbor: "Peter! Peter! There are Dr. Labagh and Dr. Cannon! Tell the Dominie, quick! to get them both into the pulpit together!"

His desire was gratified. The "Dominie" did "get them both into the pulpit together," and it was a great delight to the people to see them there.

Dr. Labagh opened the services, and, in the prayer before the sermon, remembered his venerable friend in petitions of touching fervor and affection. He rendered thanks for "the long life of usefulness which God had been pleased to grant him," and prayed that he might "'still bring forth fruit in old age,' and experience the promise: 'This God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.'" In like manner, Dr. Cannon, in the concluding prayer, rendered thanks "for the distinguishing mercy shown to that Christian brother who introduced the exercises of the morning," and entreated that God would "give him special enlargement in spiritual affection and in prayer, and great comfort in the love of his Saviour." When they stood up together, at the close of the service, surrounded, in the minds of those who beheld them, with a thousand

Digitized by Google

sacred memories of the past, they seemed the very illustration of the poet's ideal preacher; for of each of them could it be truly said:

> "He bore his great commission in his look,
> But sweetly tempered awe, and softened all he spoke.
> He preached the joys of heaven, and pains of hell,
> And warned the sinner with becoming zeal,
> But on eternal mercy loved to dwell."

An incident occurred on this occasion which served to impress the text of Dr. Cannon's sermon, and the chapter and verse of the book in which it was found, very distinctly upon the minds of the people. It was the Doctor's habit to write his sermons, and commit them to memory. He possessed that faculty in extraordinary power and tenacity, and having accustomed himself to use it from early life, he always preferred to preach without notes. For once, however, his memory failed him. He designed to preach from John 6: 37, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." After he had entered the pulpit, he took the Bible from the desk, and opening at the Gospel acccording to John, he began to search for the chapter and verse. He turned over the leaves very deliberately, first in one direction, and then in the other. He paused a moment, with three or four leaves standing upright, between the opposite halves of the book, and then turned them over again, for-

Digitized by Google

ward and backward, now this way, and now that, but apparently without success. The congregation were singing the last stanza of the hymn, and still the good old Doctor could not find the chapter and verse. He finally gave it up in despair, and having restored the Bible to the desk, he took his place, and began his sermon by announcing, with that clear articulation, and measured emphasis, for which he was remarkable, "You will find my text in the Gospel according to John, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" The omission of chapter and verse was scarcely observed. But the people, on their way home, began to inquire of each other, where the Doctor took his text. No one seemed to recollect, and every one apologized for his forgetfulness by saying that his memory was very poor. Many and grievous were the sins of omission which the people charged that day upon the unfortunate faculty of memory. Some one finally asserted that the chapter and verse had not been mentioned; and it came to be a question for debate, whether they had, or had not. The secret at length came out, however, through the Dominie; and the result was, that the people acquitted memory of a great many false accusations, and the chapter and verse of the text were indelibly impressed upon their minds.

The opportunities for social and Christian inter-

Digitized by Google

course, which these two venerable servants of Christ had so long enjoyed, were destined soon to come to an end. Associated in their early studies for the ministry, their friendship had continued without interruption for more than sixty years. And called in the providence of God to the pastoral care of neighboring congregations, they had labored side by side, in the same blessed cause for seventeen years together, until Dr. Cannon, in 1826, laid down his office as a pastor, to assume that of Professor of Pastoral Theology and Ecclesiastical History and Government in the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick. Even then, their respective places of residence being only about fourteen miles distant from each other, they often met in mutual visits, and often took counsel together for the prosperity of the Church and the Seminary, in which they both felt so deep an interest. While the one labored to establish new congregations, and to bring forward young men to augment the ranks of the ministry, the other devoted his days to training them in literary and theological studies, and preparing them for the duties of the sacred office. Each one, in his appointed sphere, endeavored as God gave him opportunity, to extend and to edify the kingdom of Christ.

But their work was accomplished, and their record was on high. The Master was about to call them to

Digitized by Google

their reward. In the year 1851, Dr. Cannon began to show signs of failure. His physical strength was evidently giving way, and his power of utterance became affected. The work of prostration went gradually on, until on the 7th of June, 1852, he felt it his duty to address to the General Synod, then in annual session at Williamsburgh, Long Island, the following letter:

"Rev. Fathers and Brethren in Christ: It has pleased God, as you doubtless have heard, to arrest me in my course of theological instruction, and to afflict me sorely with a disease which thus far has baffled the prescribed remedies, and left me unable to speak words either articulately or fluently. I am no longer able either to lecture to a class or preach to a congregation, in consequence of the sad and painful affection in my throat.

"In such circumstances, while I bow submissively to the will of my heavenly Father, I put myself into the hands of the General Synod to dispose of me as they think proper, and to make suitable provision for the wants of the institution in my special department of study. The Synod will consider the above sentiment as containing a full resignation of my office, or as standing aside to receive help, until my bodily malady shall be either removed or more fully devel-

Digitized by Google

oped. I doubt much whether my state of health will so improve as to permit me to engage in active service. Sincerely do I thank my reverend brethren and elders for all the kindnesses shown me, and pray that they may be guided by the spirit of wisdom and love.

"I remain, with sentiments of profound respect, reverend fathers and brethren, your brother in Christ, and your obedient servant,

"JAMES S. CANNON."

The communication was received with unfeigned sorrow, and the Synod, after expressing its high sense of the important services which Dr. Cannon had rendered to the Seminary and the Church,

"*Resolved unanimously*, That Dr. Cannon be continued in his present office, and declared to be Professor Emeritus in the Theological Seminary, and that the whole amount of the salary now annexed to it be paid to him as heretofore."

But the good old man had no need of the provision which the Church, under the impulse of love and gratitude, so promptly and so tenderly made. There was a mansion of rest and a crown of glory awaiting him in the skies. And the chariot of the King of kings was even then ready and waiting to bear him

Digitized by Google

away from the scene of his mortal toils. On the holy Sabbath, July 25, 1852, he looked for the last time upon the light of earth. To two of his ministerial brethren who stood at his bedside, he said, referring doubtless to his inward conflicts: "Tell my friends I have had my trials, but I have kept the faith."

He never spoke again. Having uttered these words, and folded his arms upon his breast, he closed his eyes, and his spirit passed into the glory of heaven.

His funeral took place on the following Tuesday, July 27, when a sermon suitable to the occasion was preached in the First Reformed Dutch Church of New Brunswick, by the Rev. John Gosman, D.D., of Hudson, New York. The day was that on which the literary societies of Rutgers College usually held their anniversary, and the city was full of clergymen and visitors, who had come up from all parts of the Church to attend the annual commencement. The spacious house of worship was filled by the sorrowing assembly. After the religious services were over, his body was "carried by devout men to its burial," and laid down to its rest by the side of those of his predecessors in office. In the long procession which followed his remains to the tomb, walked his old friend and fellow-laborer, Dr. Labagh. It was a day of mourning to the Church. For "Samuel was dead,

Digitized by Google

and all Israel lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city."

Dr. Cannon was in age a little more than two years the junior of Dr. Labagh, the former having been born January 28, 1776, and the latter November 10, 1773. Dr. Cannon died July 25, 1852, aged seventy-six years, five months, and twenty-seven days, leaving his beloved and venerable brother in the ministry to follow him into the world of rest, after an interval of precisely six years and three months, to a day.*

* The Rev. James Spencer Cannon, D.D., S.T.P., was born in the island of Curaçoa, in the Caribbean sea, off the coast of Venezuela, January 28, 1776. His parents were of Irish origin. His father was a sea captain, whose residence was in the city of New York, but who, on his voyages, was often accompanied by his wife. It was during a brief delay at Curaçoa, while in the prosecution of his business, that his son, James Spencer, was born. On a similar voyage, at a later day, his wife died at Baltimore, Maryland, and her remains were interred in the Friends' burying ground in that city. When he was about ten years of age, James Spencer, together, with his two older brothers, Joseph and William, was taken by his father to Hackensack, New Jersey, to be educated under the care of Peter Wilson, LL.D. Somewhere about the year 1789 or 1790, while he was yet at school, his father lost his life at sea. The vessel, in which Captain Cannon was sailing only as passenger, was commanded by Philip Freneau, well known as one of the earliest American poets, and was bound for the port of Charleston, South Carolina. On the voyage out she encountered a terrible storm. Mr. Freneau had at that time but little, if any, practical skill as a sailor,

Digitized by Google

In the death of those with whom he had commenced his career, and had so long coöperated for the promotion of a common cause, Dr. Labagh beheld

though he afterwards became so well qualified that he took charge of a merchant ship, and made several voyages to Madeira, the West Indies, and other quarters of the world. During the storm he requested Capt. Cannon to take the command. The latter complied with the request, but while endeavoring to manage the vessel, some part of the cordage gave way, and the boom sweeping suddenly round to the opposite side, struck him and hurled him headlong from the deck into the sea. He was never heard of more. The orphan children, however, were not left without friends. Henry Brevoort, Esq., of Hackensack, became the patron of James Spencer, and educated him at his own expense. Mr. Brevoort's daughter subsequently became Mrs. Cannon.

After the removal of Dr. Wilson to assume the Professorship of Ancient Languages in Columbia College, young Mr. Cannon pursued his studies under the direction of the Rev. Alexander Miller. He was a diligent student, and drew to himself the regard of his teacher. In declamation he excelled, and while under the instruction of Mr. Miller, he more than once received a premium for his superior speaking.

In 1794, Mr. Cannon united with the Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack, of which the Rev. Solomon Froeligh, D.D., was then pastor. He studied theology under the direction of Dr. Froeligh, and Dr. John H. Livingston, and in 1796, he and his fellow-student, Mr. Labagh, were licensed to preach the Gospel by the Classis of Hackensack, after a thorough and satisfactory examination, continued through two whole days. In the same year he was settled as pastor of the united Reformed Dutch Churches of Six-Mile-Run and Millstone, in Somerset county, New Jersey. In 1807 the colle-

Digitized by Google

the premonition of his own departure. Already the infirmities of age had admonished him to retire from the active duties of the ministry, and to set his house in order preparatory to that final event which awaits all the living. And now, as he followed to the grave one of the few remaining survivors of his early years, and saw that the last links of friendship, which bound the present to the past, were dissolving at the touch of death, he felt that his days were numbered, and that the appointed hour was moving swiftly on to meet him. But he knew where he had anchored his trust, and he looked forward to his approaching

giate relation of the two Churches was dissolved, and Mr. Cannon thenceforth devoted his pastoral labors exclusively to the Church of Six-Mile-Run. In the year 1819 the trustees of Union College, Schenectady, New York, conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1826 he was called to a Professorship in the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, which office he still held at the time of his death, July 25, 1852. The only published productions of Dr. Cannon known to the writer, are, "An Address on the Emancipation of Holland, delivered in the Dutch church, in the city of New Brunswick, on the fourteenth day of February, 1814," in which he is very emphatic in his condemnation of the despotic and selfish spirit of Napoleon Bonaparte; an "Address to the President elect of Rutgers College," the Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, LL.D., on the occasion of his inauguration into office July 24, 1850; and his "Lectures on Pastoral Theology," a large octavo volume of six hundred and seventeen pages, published about a year after his death. It is a noble monument of piety and learning.

Digitized by Google

change without fear or anxiety. And why should he not? His was the glorious promise which, "though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea," could never fail of its fulfillment: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." In faith and patience, therefore, he waited for the voice from heaven to say to him: "Come up hither."

After that scene in New Brunswick, at the grave of his life-long friend, his few remaining years rolled on peacefully but rapidly to their termination. The time of his departure at length drew near. During the summer and autumn of 1858, it became evident that "the earthly house of this tabernacle was about to be dissolved," and that the spirit which had so long held there its habitation was preparing to depart, and to enter into that "building of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He experienced more difficulty in walking. There was an increased dimness of vision. His physical powers generally seemed to be giving way. Still there was no appearance of any particular disease. Failing, as he obviously was, he yet continued to take a part in the household devotions, with much feeling and always to edification. On the evening of the

Digitized by Google

fifteenth of October, he engaged as usual in worship with the family. He conducted the exercises with his ordinary tone of voice and clearness of intellect, though his prayer, probably, somewhat exceeded its accustomed length. At the close of the worship, finding himself, for the first time, unable to rise from his knees, he requested assistance, and, on taking his seat, complained of being dizzy. He was aided in retiring to bed, and remarked the next morning that he had passed a restless night.

As he had frequently been troubled with dizziness, he did not consider his case at all serious, and thought he would be out again before noon. He slept, however, most of the morning, and having at length arisen, he soon found himself obliged to return to bed. It proved to be his dying bed. He soon sank into a comatose condition, and after lingering until the morning of October twenty-fifth, about ten days after his first attack, during which he received every attention which medical skill and filial affection could render, his spirit was gently released from the body, and entered into that "rest which remaineth for the people of God."

Thus died Peter Labagh, on Monday, October 25th, 1858, at the ripe old age of eighty-four years, eleven months, and fifteen days, receiving the fulfillment of the promise: "Thou shalt come to thy grave

Digitized by Google

in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

He left no dying testimony. Nor was it needful. The great question in regard to the departed is not, How did they *die?* But it is, How did they *live?* To that question he left behind him an abundant answer. All who knew him, knew full well "that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had had his conversation in the world." Better far than any words that can be uttered with the expiring breath, is the inheritance of consolation which the dying saint bequeaths to his weeping friends, in the memory of his humble piety, and of his conscientious labors for the salvation of men and for the glory of his Redeemer. By the converts who were gathered into the kingdom of Christ through his honored instrumentality; by the Churches which he contributed so largely to establish and foster; by the Elders and Deacons whom he trained for active usefulness; by the men who are now proclaiming from the heights of Zion "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and whom he led with his own hand into the ranks of the gospel ministry; by the benevolent societies which he did so much to organize and perpetuate; and by the school of the prophets, which he always loved, and the professorships of which he labored so faithfully to endow, our

Digitized by Google

venerated father, "being dead, yet speaketh." *These* are his dying testimony. More than these who could ask?

It is true that when he sank into the heavy slumber, from which, as it proved in the end, he never awaked, his children prayed that his powers of thought and expression might be once more restored, that the veil might be lifted, if it were only for a moment, from his mind, so that he could again testify his confidence in Christ, and give them his parting benediction. But it was not the will of God. He who "doeth all things well," saw that it was not needful for His glory, or for the comfort of those who survived. It is quite certain that the last moments of full consciousness which the aged saint enjoyed on earth, were in the act of family worship. And we may say, therefore, truly, that when the message came to him from heaven, it found him literally on his knees.

The funeral took place on the following Wednesday, October 27th. It was a bright and beautiful day, and the solemn aspects of nature, in the withered verdure of wood and field, seemed to reïterate the monitory words of the prophet, "We all do fade as a leaf." The College and Theological Seminary at New Brunswick suspended their exercises, and most of the faculty were present at the funeral. At

Digitized by Google

eleven o'clock a large number of persons, of whom many were clergymen, assembled at the residence of Mr. Lawrence Van Derveer, the son-in-law of the deceased, in the bosom of whose family he breathed his last. Prayer was there offered by Professor Van Vranken, of the Theological Seminary; after which the procession moved to the Church at Harlingen, so long the scene of Dr. Labagh's ministerial labors. The building was crowded with a great concourse of people, who had come together from the Harlingen and the neighboring congregations, to testify their respect for the memory of their departed father and friend. The Consistory of the Church, as an expression of their sorrow, had draped the pulpit in mourning, and in front of it, there lay sleeping in the vesture of the dead all that was mortal of Peter Labagh.

The services were opened with an invocation by the Rev. Edward P. Livingston, late of Griggstown, New Jersey, but now of Bushnell, Illinois. After reading a portion of Scripture, the Rev. Dr. Messler, of Somerville, lead the assembly in prayer. The sermon, founded on John 4: 38, "Other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors," was then delivered by the Rev. Gabriel Ludlow, D.D., of Shannock, who had been designated to that service, by Dr. Labagh, several years previous to his decease. Of the sermon itself, it is not necessary to say more

Digitized by Google

than that it sustained the already established reputation of its author. It will be found in full in an appendix to this Memoir. The closing prayer was offered by the Rev. John Gardner, of Harlingen. At the conclusion of the exercises the procession was again formed, and proceeded to the old burying ground of the Harlingen Church. Here, in the hope of a glorious resurrection, the remains of the aged and honored servant of Christ were committed to the keeping of the tomb. Professor Van Vranken read an impressive selection of scripture texts, and offered a few brief remarks, and the multitude retired in solemn silence, leaving the weary sleeper to the repose from which "he shall not awake, till the heavens be no more."*

* It should be stated in this connection, that near the time of Dr Labagh's death, the people of Rocky Hill purchased ground for a public cemetery in a pleasant location about half a mile north of the village. Convinced that the more private and too often neglected burying grounds must, at no distant day, be in a large measure abandoned for the well guarded cemetery, in which the whole community felt an interest, the family of Dr. Labagh were desirous that his remains should be removed to Rocky Hill; and the more so, as the cemetery is quite near the family residence where Dr. Labagh spent the twelve years immediately preceding his death. After much consideration the removal was decided upon by his children, and, on May 27, 1859, just seven months from the time of his burial, his remains were removed, and deposited in the Rocky Hill cemetery, where a suitable monument is about to be erected to his memory.

Digitized by Google

As kindred and friends, and the survivors to whom he ministered in the Gospel, shall pass away, one by one, and be carried by neighbors to their burial, how many will be the recollections which the grave of Peter Labagh will awaken in the minds of the living! They will remember the words which he spoke, while he was yet with them. They will see him again, as in years gone by, standing in the sacred desk, and pleading with them to give their hearts to the Saviour, and to live for heaven. They will be carried back over the interval of time, and the scenes that have vanished to return no more, save to memory's eye, will rise up before them as by some spell of magic. The form, the features, the gesture of the hand, the look of love—they will all be there. The past will return. The vision of former years will be reproduced. The thoughts which then swept over the mind, like cloud shadows over the plain; the emotions which then stirred the heart, as the breeze stirs the forest, will be rescued from oblivion, and be restored to life and power.

A few days after the funeral, the Consistory of the Church of Griggstown met, and directed by a unanimous vote, the following tribute to the memory of Dr. Labagh, to be placed upon their minutes, and a copy to be forwarded to the *Christian Intelligencer* for publication:

Digitized by Google

"*Whereas*, It has pleased the Great Head of the Church, on the 25th day of October, to remove from us, by death, our venerable and much esteemed father and brother, the Rev. Peter Labagh, D.D., therefore,

"*Resolved*, That we feel greatly afflicted in his removal; for not only was he our instructor in youth, but the counselor of our riper years: we shall miss him in times of difficulty and affliction, when the advice of a sound and experienced mind, and a warm and true heart, is most needed.

"*Resolved*, That this Church, in his removal, has sustained an irreparable loss; for his venerable form, and his words of wisdom and piety, will no longer be with us to encourage in the divine life, save as he and his instructions live in grateful memory.

"*Resolved*, That we acknowledge and feel the kindness of a covenant keeping God, in sparing him for so long and eminent a career of usefulness in the Church of Christ, and for permitting us for so many years to look up to him, as children to a parent.

"*Resolved*, That we acknowledge with gratitude the ordering of Providence, with whom are the times and the seasons, in granting so beautiful a day for his interment; thus permitting the young and the aged, and his ministerial brethren, in so large a number, to be present at his burial.

Digitized by Google

"*Resolved*, That we cherish a grateful memory of the hours spent under his ministry, in the catechetical and Bible class, in the sanctuary, in the prayer meeting and social intercourse, and in planning for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

"*Resolved*, That we tender to his bereaved family our sincere condolence in their sore affliction, and weep with them as they weep, feeling that death has removed from us and them a mutual, and dearly beloved, and valuable friend."

The Classis of Philadelphia, at the semi-annual meeting, held April 19, 1859, adopted the following resolutions as an expression of sorrow in view of the loss which that body had sustained in the death of Dr. Labagh, for nearly forty-five years one of its most prompt and efficient members:

"*Resolved*, That we, as a Classis, would express and record our sincere and deep sense of the loss of one who has been a member of this body since its first organization, a member always punctual and highly useful, and our very great respect for and confidence in the deceased, as a disciple and minister of Christ.

"*Resolved*, That we desire to express and record our gratitude to God for the excellent qualities and gifts of our departed father; for his decided useful-

Digitized by Google

ness and example while in the ministry, during a period so protracted; for the continuance of his faculties to an extreme old age; for the exemption, almost to the last, from great bodily prostration and suffering; and for the good hope we cherish that he has gone to his rest and reward.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of the above resolutions be forwarded to the widow and children of the deceased, and to the editor of the *Christian Intelligencer*."

It has already been stated that Dr. Labagh was one of the founders of the Somerset County Bible Society, and that he always took a peculiar pleasure in being present at its meetings. That Society held its forty-second anniversary at Somerville, August 9, 1859, on which occasion it gave utterance to its profound respect for the memory of the dead in the following appropriate terms:

"*Whereas*, It has pleased Almighty God to remove by death, since the last annual meeting, the Rev. Peter Labagh, D.D., for a long series of years pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church of Harlingen, and one of the founders of this Society; and whereas, it is highly proper that notice be taken of this dealing of the Most High, therefore,

"*Resolved*, That while we bow with submission to

Digitized by Google

the Providence of God, which has taken from us this venerable servant of His, we recognize the goodness of God in so long sparing him to minister in His name, and to labor in the cause of the Bible.

"*Resolved*, That the departure from among us of those who have taken so much interest in all that pertains to the work of Bible distribution, shows us who survive the high importance of working while it is called day.

"*Resolved*, That the Society sincerely sympathizes with the family and friends of the deceased, in the Providence which has removed from them their venerable relation, and would commend them to the care of Him whose Gospel he so long proclaimed."

After this Memoir was completed, and had gone to the office of publication, the writer received, through President Frelinghuysen, of Rutgers College, a similar testimony to the deep sense of regard entertained for Dr. Labagh by the Board of Trustees of that institution. At a meeting held October 11, 1859, the ensuing resolutions were unanimously adopted by the Board:

"*Resolved*, That we record, with deep respect and veneration for his memory, the decease of the Rev. Peter Labagh, D.D., late a member of this Board, who, by his constant and faithful services, evinced

Digitized by Google

his interest in the welfare of Rutgers College; and by a long life of earnest and devoted labors in the gospel ministry, promoted the edification and prosperity of the Church; turned many to righteousness; and has gone, as we trust and believe, to reap the gracious rewards of a well-spent life.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of this resolution be furnished to his bereaved widow and family, and be also published in the *Christian Intelligencer* and in *The Sower*."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER — PERSONAL APPEARANCE, HEALTH, AND VIGOR — INTELLECTUAL SYMMETRY — COMMON SENSE AND JUDGMENT, AND FERTILITY OF INVENTION — REASONING POWERS — LOVE OF POLITE LITERATURE AND MUSIC, AND OF NEATNESS AND PERSPICUITY OF STYLE — WIT AND HUMOR — ANECDOTES — MEMORY — SOLEMN MYSTERY OF ITS POWER IN THE DYING — HABITS AS A STUDENT — PIETY — ANECDOTE — PREACHING — PASTORAL LABORS AND INFLUENCE — TESTIMONY OF REV. N. D. WILLIAMSON, A FORMER PARISHIONER — CHURCH LOVE AND CATHOLIC SYMPATHIES — REGARD FOR DR. MILLER — UNIFORMITY OF THE IMPRESSION MADE BY DR. LABAGH UPON THE MINDS OF OTHERS — LETTER OF DR. VAN VECHTEN — LETTER OF DR. BETHUNE — CONCLUSION.

OF the character of Dr. Labagh, in several of its various aspects, a general idea has already been conveyed by the foregoing sketch of his life and labors. As every man's history is but the external development of his character, so the page which records the one is only the mirror which reflects the other to the reader's mind. The ruling spirit of the actor is ever so transfused into the action he performs, that if it does not lie upon the surface, it lies, at least, like

Digitized by Google

some of the veins of the human body which guide the ruddy currents of its life, so near the surface, as to be apparent to every spectator. It is the less needful, therefore, that the writer should dwell at any considerable length upon many of Dr. Labagh's characteristics.

From his early infancy to his old age, he was a person of robust and vigorous health. He enjoyed in its fullest sense, what so few comparatively of the human race are permitted to enjoy, the blessing of a sound mind in a sound body. In stature, as in form and feature, he shared largely the physical peculiarities of the Holland race, from which he sprang. He was a man of probably a little less than the medium height, of firmly compacted frame, of ample shoulders, and of well developed chest. Even in his advanced years he retained, without being obese, the rounded fullness of outline and limb, and the appearance of easy flexibility, which we so often observe in a child. Yet, when the writer first knew him, whatever may have been the case at an earlier period of his life, his movements were not remarkable either for any exhibition or for any lack of grace. He had a full face, and an eye not brilliant, but clear and expressive. His upper lip was slightly scarred, by an accident which happened to him in his childhood, but not to such an extent as to constitute either a

Digitized by Google

deformity in his personal appearance, or an impediment to his speech. His head was very large. The most striking feature he possessed, probably, was his broad and massive forehead. As it lay in calm repose, partly obscured, and partly gleaming out though the grayish locks which fell carelessly upon it, bold, solid, and capacious; borrowing also from the expression of the countenance as a whole, a part of the peculiarity by which it arrested the attention, it spoke unmistakably to the thoughful beholder, of the intellectual power which there held its seat. Viewed in regard to its mental indications Dr. Labagh had a very interesting face. A clergyman,* who is himself the son of a distinguished clergyman, stated recently in a conversation, that he remembered when a lad, to have singled out from the countenances of a number of ministers whom he saw at his father's house, the countenance of Dr. Labagh as one which was to him uncommonly attractive.

There have probably been but few ministers in the active service of the Church, within the memory of any person now living, who have enjoyed more uniform health, or who have been less frequently interrupted by bodily ailment, while in the performance of their official duties.

* The Rev. John Mason Ferris, of Chicago, Illinois.

Digitized by Google

Dr. Labagh's mind presented a peculiar combination and harmony of endowments. In the distribution of intellectual gifts by the Creator, some persons receive one faculty in predominant strength, and some another; but it seldom occurs, that upon one and the same individual all, or even many, of the faculties which enter into the mental constitution, are bestowed in extraordinary measure. It has passed into a proverb, as old at least as the Roman poet, who sang the wanderings of Æneas, that "we cannot, all of us, do all things." Wit and judgment seldom go together. The faculty which inclines a person to enter with pleasure into the rigorous processes of mathematical calculation or metaphysical reasoning, is rarely found in alliance with that other faculty, which leads its possessor in delight through the poet's ideal realm of taste and beauty. Between the remaining faculties as well, there seems often to be a disagreement which renders it, in the common opinion, an impossibility, or, if not that, at all events a contradiction, for one person to be equally eminent in them all.

To this rule it may be said, though with considerable allowance, that there are occasional exceptions. Here and there an individual arises who seems to combine in himself, if not the sum of all the faculties, at least many of those which are thought to be

Digitized by Google

in opposition to each other. Without intending to utter the extravagant sentiment—extravagant, to whomsoever it might be applied—that Dr. Labagh possessed *every* faculty in remarkable power, the writer believes that he *may* say, with entire truth, that in the number, the strength, and the harmony of its natural and peculiar endowments, the intellectual character of Dr. Labagh was worthy of great admiration.

He possessed, first of all, "a large round-about common sense," which seemed to diffuse itself through every part, and to *regulate* every power of his mental constitution. He had also, among the original elements of his character, a far-reaching and practical sagacity, which, by constant use in his intercourse with men, became still more acute and ready. His judgment, as might be inferred from the possession of these qualities, was sound and reliable; and consequently he seldom failed in his selection of the time, place or means, for the execution of those plans which he had either devised himself, or adopted from others, for the extension and prosperity of the Church. He was eminently a safe counselor, and on the floor of the Synod and of the Classis his opinions very frequently exercised a controlling influence. His executive ability, his promptness of resource and invention in an emergency, and the perseverance with

Digitized by Google

which he labored on, even when the prospect seemed to be far from promising, were quite clearly among his characteristic traits. Amid the discouragement of others, as in the effort to endow the third professorship, for example, his indomitable spirit was the prophet of final success.

In matters which required the exercise of discrimination and reason he was no less at home. His perceptions were very rapid in seizing the salient points of a question under debate, and yet they were extremely clear. "He had the eye of a bird, it was both telescopic and microscopic." When he read or listened, he seemed to discover, by a sort of intuition, whither a principle or argument would lead, and as he surveyed the chain of reasoning before him, he would lay his finger at once upon the defective link, and say, "There; at that point the argument breaks down." His logical faculty was a prominent feature of his mind. It moved on to its object with great perspicuity and directness.

And yet, whatever appearance of contradiction the statement may have, it is still true, that with these more rugged and practical qualities, he combined in an equal, if not superior degree, what seemed to be a natural taste for the beauty and grace of polite literature, the rhythm and cadence of poetry, and the melody and harmony of music. It is here spoken of

Digitized by Google

as a *natural* taste, because it did not *seem* to be so much the effect of his education and reading, as the innate cause which impelled him in early life to seek the advantages of knowledge, and in his riper years to delight in the works of the great masters of English composition. To the same faculty of mind, as the arbiter of propriety and beauty, are we to refer the precision, and what Dryden calls the *cleanness* of his modes of expression, whether in written or extemporaneous discourse. There were no complicated, or involved, or ambiguous sentences; no dangling appendages hanging on to the ends of them, like the half loosened ravelings of a garment. When he used figurative language, there was no violation of unity, or mixing up of metaphors, no "beginning with a tempest, and ending with a conflagration." What he had to say, he *said* chastely and appropriately, but in downright and unmistakable Saxon, and then stopped. The writer remembers to have had his attention frequently arrested while listening to Dr. Labagh's public addresses, and even his prayers, by their remarkable freedom from every thing like tautology or infelicity of expression. His manuscript sermons and other productions of his pen, which have been examined since his death, with a view to the preparation of this Memoir, have given additional evidence of the same delicacy of

Digitized by Google

taste, in the erasure and substitution of terms, in order to avoid an unpleasant repetition, or an inaccuracy in conveying his thoughts, or an awkward collocation of words in a sentence.

Among the other characteristics of Dr. Labagh's mind, his wit and humor are also worthy of mention. The fact that he was a man of thorough experimental piety and rare good sense, affords a sufficient assurance that the sportive play of his faculties did not degenerate into levity on the one hand, nor into coarseness on the other. His heart was a perennial fountain of kindness and good will toward men, and seldom, if ever, did it permit him to exercise his gifts in wanton aggression upon others. But if the object and the occasion required it, then, quick and glittering, he flashed like the electric cloud.

He was present, some years since, at a meeting of ministers and others, who had been brought together by the anniversary of a local benevolent society. In the number of those who, with himself, were assigned for entertainment to the hospitality of a gentleman in the neighborhood, was a person who had formerly held a position in the United States navy. Having been accustomed to the vocabulary employed on shipboard, he did not seem to recognize the impropriety of introducing it into conversation with a company of clergymen, and, for the most part, of pious lay-

Digitized by Google

men. While at the dinner table, some reference was made to a certain course of action which, it was proposed, should be pursued by the members of the society; whereupon the ex-naval officer exclaimed, with rather startling energy of voice: "I would n't do it; by Jupiter, I would n't do it!" Dr. Labagh, who was sitting near, turned around, and, with a quiet air, inquired of him: "Are you a heathen?" "No!" said he, abruptly, "what makes you think so?" "Why," answered the Doctor, calmly, "I heard you swearing by one of the heathen gods." It is needless to say that nothing more was heard of "Jupiter" after that.

At another time, while engaged in collecting funds to endow a professorship in the Theological Seminary, on approaching an individual he was accosted thus: "What! have you come begging again?" The Doctor replied: "Do not *you* go begging every day? and has your heavenly Benefactor ever said to you: 'What! have you come begging again?'" The repartee had argument as well as wit, and secured the desired contribution.

On one occasion, during a brief visit which they made together at Princeton, New Jersey, Dr. Labagh and the writer had the honor to dine with the President of the College. Several strokes of pleasantry passed between the two learned Doctors, which memory

Digitized by Google

does not now recall. After dinner it was proposed to take a look at a number of interesting paintings in the portrait gallery belonging to the institution. While passing out of the hall, on their return, attention was called to the fixtures, which had not yet been completed, for the introduction of gas into some of the College buildings. Turning towards the President, with whom he was on terms of social intimacy, Dr. Labagh said, with his peculiar twinkle of the eye: "So you have come to the conclusion here that the College can't prosper without *gas*." "Oh! no," replied the President, promptly, in the same vein, "*no* college can get along without *gas*."

Dr. Labagh's humor, even beyond three score years and ten, was the simple-hearted, innocent, gleesome humor of a child. Time dimmed his eye, and whitened his locks, and impaired the vigor of his frame, but it never withered the natural joyousness of his spirit. Everywhere else the winter of old age had evidently come, but in his breast it was always spring. He had a quick perception of the ludicrous, and any thing that was really adapted to call it into play, as a grotesque association of ideas, or combination of parts, or an exhibition of imaginary alarm, awakened in him a merriment so genial and hearty, and yet so sensible, that it became contagious to every one around him. "When you have taken all the boy

Digitized by Google

out of a man," says the old adage, "there is not enough left to render him worth preserving." The boy, in this case, was never lost. In the social gatherings of the neighborhood, consequently, of whomsoever composed, Dr. Labagh was always welcome. Every age found companionship in him. To the young, he was always "the dear old Dominie," and when he was taken at last to a better world, none mourned his loss more sincerely than they.

Dr. Labagh had an excellent memory. It was not only capacious and retentive, but exceedingly prompt. By those who were familiar with him in his prime, it is said to have acted with uncommon vigor in seizing and reproducing, at the will of its possessor, whatever seemed most important for his use. Superior as it was, however, it is not probable that it was equal to that of his friend, Dr. Cannon. *His* memory was decidedly a *power* among his faculties. Its comprehensiveness and tenacity were prodigious. He reminded one of Fuller's remark about Dr. John Reynolds: "His memory was little less than miraculous, he himself being the truest table to the multitude of voluminous books he had read." Toward the close of his life, for three or four years at least before he died, Dr. Labagh's memory suffered, in some degree, a diminution of its strength and promptitude of action. Like almost all persons

Digitized by Google

far advanced in age, he loved to go back to the days of his youth and earlier manhood, and to dwell upon the scenes and events in which he then mingled or bore a part. A striking illustration of this tendency to recall the past, was afforded by an incident which occurred during the last sickness of his old friend and brother in the ministry, Dr. Brodhead. He died in June, 1855, at the age of a little more than seventy-three years. A short time before he expired, he roused himself after an interval of unbroken quiet, and with great energy of voice uttered the words, "Peter Labagh! Peter Labagh!" Having done this, he again relapsed into silence. While the body was sinking, the mind was holding converse with the friends of by-gone years. There is something mysterious and awful in the power of memory, which we so often see illustrated in the aged and the dying, to restore the past, and cause it to move, in solemn procession and review, before the vision of the soul. It is the foreshadowing, to the wicked, of one of the most tremendous and appalling realities that can be anticipated by them in their experience of the eternal world.

With regard to Dr. Labagh's habits as a student, it should be stated, in order to a proper estimate of his character, that they were more or less modified by the circumstances in the midst of which he com-

Digitized by Google

menced his ministry. His age, the early part of it, at least, was the formative period of the Church. The agitations occasioned by the Revolutionary struggle of nearly eight years' duration, had indeed, subsided, but their effects upon society were still visible, and required the ameliorating hand of time. After a violent and somewhat prolonged separation, the scattered elements of the Church had begun to re-unite. And the only alternative presented to him was a life, either studious but barren, on the one hand, or active and practical, and consequently full of benefit to the Church, on the other. His choice fell upon the latter. He comprehended the demands of his age, and he met them with promptness and success. The result to him was, that he did not, because he could not, form the habits of a systematic and laborious student. It would be no more reasonable to find fault with him *because* he did not, than it would be to find fault with the pioneer in the wilderness *because* he did not set up his chemical apparatus, and go to analyzing the soil, while his family were starving for bread. It would have been a downright dereliction of duty, if he had turned aside from the work of re-construction to which the providence of God called him, and given up his time, however pleasant it might have been to himself, to the pursuits of theological and various learning.

Digitized by Google

As it was, he was a man of large reading as well as of large observation. His early training must have been very accurate. What he knew apparently, he knew really. In his knowledge of biblical and ecclesiastical history, and of the principles and application of hermeneutics, he was clear and prompt. But his forte probably lay in the department of systematic theology. Among the subjects which a clergyman of decided intellect usually finds himself able to examine, there were not many with which Dr. Labagh was not familiar.

His piety was very simple and child-like. Of him it could be truly said, that he "received with meekness the engrafted word." He was a man of thorough Christian experience. There was about him a reverent, docile confidence in God, as his heavenly Father. The love of Christ, and his power and willingness to save, were very precious to his soul. And his love for Christ, and for his Church, in return, warmed him through and through. It manifested itself in the spirit of prayer and the disposition to contribute liberally to the cause of religion and benevolence, which characterized him to the last. He was never able to tell exactly when it was that he experienced a change of heart. His transition from nature to grace seems to have been like the transition from the darkness that precedes the dawn to the full

Digitized by Google

brightness of the risen day; so gradual and so gentle that he scarcely knew what had occurred, until he found himself in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and saying, with him whose eyes were opened by the Saviour: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." But no one could be with him long without discovering that in his heart there was something which nature has no power to give. He took a special delight in recognizing the hand of his heavenly Father in all the blessings and events of life. His home, his raiment, his food, were all the gifts of divine mercy. He never rose from the table where he had eaten, without first expressing his gratitude; and the expression was not a mere form, but the genuine outbreathing of his soul.

An old gentleman who had long been an elder in a neighboring Church to that of Harlingen, related not long since an incident which left on his mind an abiding and vivid impression of the propriety of returning thanks after meals. He was dining some years ago with Dr. Labagh, in a company of persons who were nearly all professors of religion, when some of those present, after completing their dinner, arose and left the table. Acting under the force of example, he was proceeding to leave himself, when Dr. Labagh, to whom he was well known, turned around, and with a look of surprise, said to him,

Digitized by Google

"What! are you going away, too, without returning thanks?" And then, alluding to the scripture quotation which stands connected with the form of "Grace after Meat," in the liturgy of the Reformed Dutch Church, he added, "You surely have not forgotten the precept, 'When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.'" The gentleman took his seat again, and, with those of the company who were left, remained until they had united in a suitable expression of thanks.*

* Archbishop Tillotson, in a sermon on Joshua 24: 15, "preached at St. Lawrence-Jury, July 13, 1684," has the following admirable paragraphs on the subject of family religion, among the duties of which he places the habitual recognition of God's providence in the supply of our physical wants, by asking a blessing and returning thanks at our meals. Of the obligations which rest upon heads of households, one of "the principal parts" is to be performed, as he tells us:

"By setting up the constant worship of God in our families. By daily prayers to God, every morning and evening, and by reading some portion of the Holy Scriptures at those times, especially out of the Psalms of David, and the New Testament. And this is so necessary to keep alive and to maintain a sense of God and religion in the minds of men, that where it is neglected, I do not see how any family can in reason be esteemed a family of Christians, or, indeed, to have any religion at all.

"Besides the reading of the Holy Scriptures, which are the great fountains of divine truth, we may do well likewise to add to these

Digitized by Google

As a preacher Dr. Labagh was truly apostolic. His sermons were simple, evangelical, full of divine truth, and above all, full of Jesus Christ and him cru-

other pious and profitable books, which by their plainness are fitted for the instruction of all capacities in the most necessary points of belief and practice; of which sort, God be thanked, there is an abundant store, but none that I think is more fitted for general and constant use than that excellent book, so well known by the title of the 'Whole Duty of Man;' because it is conveniently divided into parts or sections, one of which may be read in the family at any time when there is leisure for it, but more especially on the Lord's day, when the whole family may the more easily be brought and kept together, and have the opportunity to attend upon these things without distraction.

"And, which I must by no means omit, because it is in many families already gone, and in others going, out of fashion; I mean a solemn acknowledgment of the providence of God, by begging his blessing at our meals upon his good creatures provided for our use, and by returning thanks to him for the benefit and refreshment of them; this being a piece of natural religion, owned and practised in all ages, and in most places of the world; but never so shamefully and scandalously neglected, and I fear by many slighted and despised, as it is amongst us at this day; and most neglected where there is greatest reason for the doing of it, I mean at the most plentiful tables and among those of highest quality: as if great persons were ashamed, or thought scorn to own, from whence these blessings come, like the nation of the Jews, of whom God complains in the prophet, Hos. 2:8: 'She knew not that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' She knew not, that is, she would not acknowledge from whose bounty all these blessings came; or, as if the poor were obliged to thank God for a little,

Digitized by Google

cified; and he delivered them to his people with an earnestness and unction which left no room for doubt in regard to the great object which he was most anxious to secure. "Ruin by the fall, recovery by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit," were the prevailing themes of his ministry. Like the apostles and all their true successors in every age, he

but those who are fed to the full, and whose cups overflow, so that they are almost every day surfeited of plenty, were not at least equally bound to make returns of thankful acknowledgment to the great Giver of all good things, and to implore his bounty and blessing, upon whom the eyes of all do wait, that he may give them their meat in due season.

"O, crooked and perverse generation! Do you thus reason? Do you thus requite the Lord, foolish and unwise? This is a very sad and broad sign of the prevalence of Atheism and Infidelity among us, when so natural and so reasonable a piece of religion, so meet and equal an acknowledgment of the constant and daily care and providence of Almighty God towards us, begins to grow out of date and use, in a nation professing religion and the belief of the being and providence of God. Is it not a righteous thing with God to take away his blessings from us, when we deny him this just and easy tribute of praise and thanksgiving? Shall not God visit for this horrible ingratitude? And shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Hear, O heavens, and be ye horribly astonished at this! I hope it cannot be thought misbecoming the meanest of God's ministers, in a matter wherein the honor of God is so nearly concerned, to reprove, even in the highest and greatest of the sons of men, so shameful and heinous a fault with a proportionable vehemence and severity."

Digitized by Google

held them up before the minds of his hearers, plainly and perseveringly; and he enforced them upon their consideration with a heart-felt affection and desire for their eternal welfare, which indicated how profoundly he felt their importance in his own soul. In a sermon delivered on the occasion of his death, in the Reformed Dutch Church of Rocky Hill, by the pastor, the Rev. Martin L. Schenck, it was said of him no less happily than truly: "His preaching was always judicious, clear in its analysis, and highly instructive. Many years since one of his parishioners remarked to me, 'I have heard great men preach, but great men will some times say foolish things; but I have never heard Mr. Labagh say a foolish thing in my life.' And this testimony is confirmed by all whose privilege it was to sit under his ministry. He was a ready man. His extemporaneous discourses were delivered with quite as much promptness, fullness of matter, and freedom from hesitation, as those he had more elaborately prepared. To me this indicates the fullness of his general preparation, and that activity of thought which secured him from the loss of mental power. Possibly he may at times have relied upon it too much, but that lamp only is ever ready for use, which is kept continually filled and trimmed."

As a pastor he was at once kind and faithful. His

Digitized by Google

cordial sympathy with his people in all their sorrows and their joys endeared him to their hearts; and his judicious counsel and cheerful alacrity in doing what he could to promote their happiness in time and in eternity, won their confidence and enabled him to labor with success.

He always felt and manifested a deep interest in the religious training and welfare of the young. But during the later years of his pastoral connection it became so conspicuous, that it might almost be said to have been one of the peculiar features of his ministry. In a sermon which he preached to the young people of his congregation, only a short time before he retired from regular service, he expressed to them, in affecting terms, his long cherished desire that they might be rooted and grounded in the doctrines of God's word, and be made partakers of life everlasting. That desire, he informed them, so far from diminishing in his old age, had become deeper and stronger with the lapse of years, and he knew of nothing more worthy to be made the subject of earnest prayer by the Church, than the conversion of the children and youth to Christ.

His evident aim, and his efforts to secure this object, left an abiding impression upon the minds of his people. A clergyman, the Rev. N. Dubois Williamson, pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church of

Digitized by Google

Wawarsing, New York, who grew up within the bounds of the Harlingen congregation, and was brought, by Dr. Labagh's instrumentality, into both the Church and the ministry, has furnished an interesting account of his early recollections, from which the following is an extract. In speaking of Dr. Labagh as a pastor he says:

"His sermons recognized the duty of ministers to give especial attention to the moral and spiritual culture of the young. We were never left to imagine that we must not feel any personal interest in the preaching until we arrived at adult age. On the contrary, we were made to understand and feel that *we* needed the Gospel, its guards and its provisions, for our usefulness and happiness, here and hereafter; that *we*, *especially*, needed to have its practical influence exerted upon us in the season of youth.

"His superiority as an expounder of biblical and catechetical recitations, did much to interest the young in Bible facts, and to produce clear convictions of the truth of Bible doctrines. In this department of ministerial labor he had few equals. I cannot forbear to add the testimony of my own experience and observation to the fact, that the doctrinal and practical influence of these expositions was very marked at the time when they were given, and that it will be perpetuated in the ministry, and in the

Digitized by Google

personal influence, and family training, of many who enjoyed the privilege of thus witnessing the workings of Dr. Labagh's mind in some of his most unconstrained and happy-moods.

"His interest and labors in behalf of the Sabbath schools of his charge, exercised a powerful influence on the souls of the young. I have thought that in many respects the Sabbath schools of the Harlingen congregation, at the time I was connected with them, were model schools; at least, I have not met with their superiors in interest and efficiency. They were the honor and the blessing of the Church. The pastor had very energetic helpers in the superintendents and teachers; but his own labors were freely expended, not only in managing and directing the schools in their connection, but in laboring in each of them as he had opportunity. It was his exposition of the portion of divine truth contained in our Sabbath school lesson, that was the means of, I trust, my own conversion, and that has thus consecrated Sabbath school instruction in my eyes as a blessed instrumentality for saving souls.

"He was timely and earnest in his endeavors to direct the attention of converted youth toward the sacred ministry. He did not wait until their souls were congealed with worldliness, or they were fixed in some secular position from which they could not

Digitized by Google

honorably extricate themselves. He came to them when their hearts were warm with the fervor of their first love, before their plans of life were fixed, and he honestly and earnestly endeavored to win the consent of their souls to the labors, the privations, and the joys of the holy office. I cannot tell what might otherwise have been the workings of Providence, but so far as I now know, my own heart and life would never have been directed to the work of the Lord, but for his counsels and labors. Thus he became not only my spiritual father, but my father in the ministry; and whatever good I may be enabled to accomplish in the world, must be attributed to the blessing of the Lord upon his efforts to train the youth of his charge for Christian usefulness. I presume that the same thing is true of a number of other clergymen.

"He was wise and energetic in counseling and aiding them until they had completed their preparations for the ministry. Whether they depended wholly, or partially, or not at all, upon the pecuniary assistance of others, he was ever ready to assist them with his advice. And his plans were always effective for the aid of those who needed assistance. Nor did he allure them into positions of difficulty, and then leave them to struggle through, as best they might, by the aid of others, but he was ready to help them, and work for them, and protect them to the end.

Digitized by Google

"He continued to feel and manifest a personal interest in their labors after their entrance into the ministry, and he was a valuable and able counselor to them in their pastoral and ecclesiastical difficulties. His natural strength and acuteness of mind, joined to his long experience, rendered him not only one of the most efficient advocates to be found on the floor of Classis or Synod, by those who were in trouble, but also, what was far better, one of the safest advisers to those who were desirous of avoiding serious difficulty. I have a letter lying before me, written by him after the physical infirmities of age had become so great, that he closes by remarking: 'I am obliged to stop, my hand shakes so that I find it very difficult to write, and my eyes are so dim that I can scarcely read what I have written;' but the positions and arguments of that letter of solicited counsel do not manifest any failing of the intellectual powers. They are as clear, as logical, as thoroughly founded on principle, and as convincing as a moral demonstration can well be made.

"The honors and ripened piety of his old age have been a delightful encouragement to those of his children in the ministry who survive him, to continue faithful unto the end. During his retirement from the active duties of his office, he was known and revered throughout the bounds of our Church, while

Digitized by Google

he was becoming more and more prepared for the blessedness of the Church triumphant in the skies. The last time I had the gratification of seeing him was on the holy Sabbath, at his own home. It seemed to me then that the light of divine love was shining so brightly in his soul, that it was beginning to beam through and irradiate his whole countenance. I shall always carry with me the recollection of his face, in that brief season of Christian fellowship, as the best personification of ripeness for glory I expect to meet on this side of the grave.

"But he now rests from his labors. His ransomed spirit is rejoicing above in the presence of the Saviour, and in the company of many of my own loved ones, who had been welcomed by him to the Church below, and then had gone before to give him a welcome to the Church above.

"'Soldier of Christ, well done!
Praise be thy new employ;
And while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Saviour's joy.'"

While he loved the Reformed Dutch Church with a hearty affection, as the Church of his fathers, and on account of what he believed to be her eminently scriptural doctrines and order, and while he endeavored to promote her usefulness and prosperity by every honorable means, he yet cherished toward all

Digitized by Google

other Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ a truly catholic and fraternal spirit. Most sincerely did he bid them God speed in the work to which they were severally called. And when, as it sometimes happened in the pleasant interchange between different ecclesiastical bodies holding substantially the same fundamental truths, ministers came into the Church from other denominations, he was ever prompt, as opportunity offered, to give them, both in form and in reality, the right hand of Christian fellowship. Let him but be assured that they were sound in the faith, and had really at heart the advancement of vital piety among men, and he received them with a warm and generous welcome, which at once made them feel that they were at home.

He entertained a very cordial regard for the Professors in the College and Theological Seminary at Princeton; and, living in the immediate vicinity of that borough, had frequent opportunities to meet them. For the Rev. Samuel Miller, D.D., one of the Professors in the Seminary, he felt a particular friendship. He frequently referred, in conversations with the writer, to remarks made by that distinguished man in allusion to the mutual interest which the Reformed Dutch and the Presbyterian Churches should cherish in each other. On one occasion Dr. Miller made him a visit, and preached in

Digitized by Google

the church at Harlingen. Among other subjects of conversation which engaged their attention, was the project which had then but recently been much discussed in certain quarters, to unite the two Theological Seminaries of New Brunswick and Princeton. Dr. Miller thought it was better to leave them as they were; and gave as a reason for his opinion, that "so long as they remained separate, there were *two* fortresses for the defence of sound doctrine, while, if they were united, there would be but *one*." Dr. Labagh was pleased with the remark as illustrating the relation of the two Churches, and showing that they were laboring together for the attainment of a common object, the maintenance of scripture truth, and the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ.

It will be gratifying to the reader to know that in this presentation—imperfect, indeed, as it is—of Dr. Labagh, in his personal characteristics and various relations, the writer has but expressed substantially the one opinion of all who, by their intimacy with him while living, are now most competent to judge. Never probably was it said of any man with greater reason, that those who knew him best, esteemed and loved him most. In regard to the less prominent features of his character, there will doubtless be in this case, as in all others, a variety of impressions. One person contemplates him from one point of ob-

Digitized by Google

servation, and another from another; one in this aspect, and another in that. But in regard to the salient and distinguishing traits which gave to him the stamp of individuality, the impression is clearly that which it has here been attempted to convey.

The following letter, in illustration of this remark, will be read with interest. It is from the pen of the Rev. Jacob Van Vechten, D.D., of Albany, author of the "Memoirs of John M. Mason, D.D.," and was written by request:

"ALBANY, December 30th, 1858.

"MRS. LAWRENCE VANDERVEER:

"DEAR MADAM: My own religious history is very intimately associated with the pastoral labors of your venerated father. Many evangelical views of divine truth were first opened up to my apprehension by his ministrations. Many expressions of deep spiritual piety became familiar to me at an early age by hearing them from his lips. When I now look back, it is evident to me that he himself must have been early taught in the best school of gospel truth. Though I was very young at the time, I recollect the commencement of his ministry at Catskill, and the baptism by his hands of some of my brothers. He was very much beloved at my father's house, and he was often there. I have a distinct recollection of the pleasure with which we children were accustomed to see him

Digitized by Google

drive up to the door, and to open for him the gates in both coming and going. The church was three miles distant, yet seldom were any of us absent. I was at first too young to understand a great deal of the preaching, but his prayers had always so much humility, fervor and unction, as to impress every one. His custom was to catechise the young people on the Sabbath, before the second service, in presence of the congregation, and at the close of this exercise to explain to the assembly the doctrine of the 'Lord's Day' just recited by the youngsters. I remember my own standing up with the rest in the slips back of the deacons' seat, and repeating the answers of the Heidelberg Catechism, and the satisfaction with which I heard the commendations bestowed upon 'one so young.' Early associations of this nature with a church edifice, I feel persuaded, are of great importance to children. Many years will the sounds which were heard there linger within those sacred walls for the benefit of impressible hearts; and even to old age their fruits will not be lost. Afterwards your father was more in the habit of having his catechetical exercises on week days, through different districts of the parish, but my recollections of the former are the most vivid.

"His removal to New Jersey was felt by the people of Catskill as a great loss. After that change I

Digitized by Google

saw him but occasionally, but never without heartfelt satisfaction. On one of these occasions, I think in 1810 or 1811, I accompanied him, together with the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Shannock, and Capt. Samuel Beekman, of Harlingen, in a private conveyance to Philadelphia. The trip must have taken the greater part of a week. During that time, more than ever before, I witnessed and enjoyed his power to entertain his friends with delightful pleasantry and interesting conversation. He kept us all in the happiest mood, and old Mr. Smith, who was naturally a very grave and serious man, thought he had never laughed so much as in that journey, both to and fro. Your father's fund of wit and humor seemed inexhaustible, yet not inconsistent with the most profound and settled feelings of solid piety.

"On another occasion, as he delighted to give play to his natural pleasantry among his intimate friends, and sometimes at their expense, he was in company with a brother minister, who had been a fellow student, and with whom he had always been on familiar terms. The conversation happened to turn on politics. This clerical brother had, at the time of their early acquaintance, been a zealous Democrat; afterwards he became a strong Federalist; and now again was very warm on his first platform. As on this occasion he very warmly advocated the views of his

Digitized by Google

latest party, Mr. Labagh reminded him of the changes through which he had passed since his young days. 'Oh!' said he, 'when I was a child, I spake as a child, and thought as a child; but since I became a man, I have put away childish things.' 'Then,' said Mr. Labagh, as quick as a flash, 'we must infer that you have now returned to your second childhood.' The effect upon the company was irresistible.

"But a few years ago I met him at a social meeting in Kingston, New York. The lady of the house was a very agreeable widow of middle life. In his usual vein of good humor, he alluded to her circumstances in connection with those of a certain ex-president, on whom a good deal of the previous conversation had turned. 'Well,' said he, 'I officiated at that gentleman's first espousals,' then, turning with an arch look of inexpressible meaning to the widow, he continued, 'and I should have no objection to officiate at the second.' The effect upon all in the room was that of the most charming pleasantry.

"I have witnessed many other instances of quick turns by which he could enliven a whole company; but such things always lose immensely by being narrated afterwards, because many of the circumstances of the passing scene cannot be transferred to any narrative.

"With regard to graver matters, I wish to say that,

Digitized by Google

according to my impressions, his views of church policy were at once liberal and solid. With strong national feelings, he yet could not close his eyes to the truth and excellence which were to be found among persons of a different race. Though Dutch by both birth and education, he had candor and discernment enough to perceive and acknowledge the mental acuteness and discrimination, the activity, the enterprise, the economy and the practical bearings of New England Christians. In 1820, when our Church was much agitated with certain persecutions against the Rev. Mr. C. Ten Eyck, for alleged Hopkinsianism, and though the implicated individual was no particular favorite, yet he could not but exert himself to stem the tide of narrow bigotry which in certain quarters was at that time raging. He boldly declared at the General Synod that ministers—none of whom he named—who a few years before had been decried as Hopkinsians, were now universally acknowledged as among the most evangelical and useful ministers of the land.

"At a still later day, when a trouble had been most wantonly created in the Classis of Orange, he took a most decided stand against the persecuting party. I heard him say, as nearly as I can recollect: 'I have on other occasions come to the Synod with feelings of anxiety and grief for the unnecessary dif-

Digitized by Google

ficulties caused by brethren, but at this time I have come with those of anger.'

"It must not be supposed that he was indifferent respecting essential truth, or that he had lost his attachment to the system in which he had been brought up, but he had sense enough to distinguish between the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel and philosophical theories for explaining them.

"His preaching was eminently practical and very seldom controversial, yet his argumentative powers were remarkably strong and ready. He was not a great reader, but a very clear thinker. Experimental piety he loved, and he was always delighted to hear it in the pulpit. His prayers had always an unusual unction from this spirit. In asking a blessing at the table, I never heard any person more feeling, solemn and impressive. At family worship I thought him peculiarly gifted. I remember to have heard my mother express her admiration of the prayers which she had heard while he was boarding at my father's house.

"He was a man of sound judgment and honest convictions. He could not bear duplicity or fraud in any department of human life. In politics he was well informed, and always acted from principle. He considered none more dangerous in the community, than those men who flatter the people, in order that

Digitized by Google

they themselves may rise and triumph on the popular wave. He was a great friend of the Dutch Church, as is very abundantly proved by his exertions in behalf of the Theological School at New Brunswick. Yet had he expansive feelings in behalf of other denominations, which promoted pure religion at home and labored to spread it abroad. With such he was always willing to coöperate. In some departments of labor he thought it better for our Church to unite with others than to remain separate.

"With the most sincere esteem,

"Your friend,

"JACOB VAN VECHTEN."

It is a striking evidence of the uniform impression which Dr. Labagh made upon all who mingled much in his society, that, in answer to a considerable number of inquiries, some proposed verbally and some by letter, in regard to his individual traits, the answers, in every principal point, have been invariably the same. Not, indeed, in their relative minuteness of statement, or in the incidents adduced for the purpose of illustration; but in their general scope and meaning, so far as they go, clearly the same, and consequently a mutual confirmation of each other.* The

* It is but just to state, that the few cases of coïncidence of thought, and, in one or two instances, almost of expression, in the

Digitized by Google

letter already submitted, furnishes a portrait of Dr. Labagh, as he appeared in his youth and manhood. The following, written by the late pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church on Brooklyn Heights, the Rev. George W. Bethune, D.D., no less distinguished for his eloquence than his learning, furnishes a portrait of Dr. Labagh, as he appeared in his old age:

"Of father Labagh's early or even his riper years, I know little, and that little only by hearsay—the grateful unanimous testimony of all who had the privilege of association with him, to his devotional spirit, fidelity, sagacity, and consistent virtues as a man, a Christian, and a minister. If there were any disposed to accuse him of wrong, it has been my happiness never to hear of it.

"My acquaintance with him began when the infirmities of age taught him the necessity of relief from the more weighty duties of his pastoral office, and when his sun, declining to the west, led him to contemplate a no distant translation to heavenly rest.

"I call him *father* Labagh, for by that affectionate

writer's attempted delineation of Dr. Labagh's character, and in the contributions to the same purpose by the eminent persons whose names they bear, were entirely accidental. They were not known to have occurred, until discovered by a careful examination, after the completion of the Memoir.

Digitized by Google

name all the members of our Classis, much younger than he, were accustomed to greet and address him. He was our *father*, to whom we gladly yielded the place of superior authority, whose counsel was at once sought and very seldom, if ever, overborne, in every question of disputed doctrine, method of business, or ecclesiastical policy. His prayers, occasional exhortations and informal talks, had for us the unction and pleasant authority of the aged disciple among his 'little children.' He resembled in our minds the Apostle of love, not only in the kindness of his speech, but also in the searching casuistry which he had acquired from long experience of a Christian and ministerial life. Never arrogant or severe, but ever direct and faithful; never assuming but ever thankful for our ready deference, he could not avoid being conscious of the rank we assigned him in our fellowship; yet he ever treated the youngest and weakest of us with the respect and sympathy of true Christian friendship.

"It was this character that drew me to him with a love and veneration which increased with every opportunity I had of enjoying his society. Perhaps this very manifest regard for him inclined him to think kindly of me, for he always treated me so as to make the hours I passed in his company very pleasant and profitable then, and the recollection of

Digitized by Google

them will be cherished while my memory lasts. His immediate family know the affectionate right I have to speak thus of our relations to each other. It is with a filial hand that I cast my sincere tribute on his sacred grave.

"Father Labagh's learning or general reading, though respectable, was not extensive, but he was always well-informed on subjects of interest, and as a theologian he was thoroughly systematic and eminently sound. This was seen in his doctrinal examination of candidates for licensure (an office always assigned him in our Classis), when, without book or *memoranda*, he would take up the scheme of evangelical doctrine, and pursue it for hours, not failing in a definition or missing a point. But he was not a bigot, or disposed to measure his Christian brethren of other sects by his own bushel, though sometimes impatient of those in our own Church who deviated from the standard they had professed to hold. His honesty and fidelity could not regard such deviation as undeserving of censure.

"His imagination, whatever it may have been in his younger years, was not predominant, but his apprehension was quick and his conception ready. Mere graces of oratory he probably never had, but there was a naturalness, frankness, directness and fervor in his thought and language, that made him

Digitized by Google

impressive and influential. His hearers knew what he meant, and were sure he meant what he said.

"He had a keen sense of the ludicrous, and often showed it in pointed, epigrammatic sayings, and even in sarcasm, the sharpness of which was relieved by his good humor. He never shrunk from the duty of rebuke, which none who received it had a right to be otherwise than thankful for. He read character with instinctive skill, and was shrewd enough to avail himself of every advantage in an honorable strife; nor was he disingenuous enough to conceal his pleasure in a fair victory.

"The special grace of his disposition was its unfading youthfulness. Wherever he grew old, it was not in his heart. The generosity which moved him to forget himself or his personal power in the advancement of the Church, so clearly shown in his zeal for the upbuilding of new congregations within his parochial territory, was not lessened but increased by age. Though conscientiously conservative of the old land-marks, and firm as a rock against unscriptural and superficial novelties, however popular, he gladly availed himself of every genuine discovery in the application of means for the promotion of education, moral and religious. He was always on the side of true progress, never fearful of enterprise or enlargement; but, on the contrary, ready, even eager

Digitized by Google

to give his aid and advocacy to whatever promised increase of usefulness. He grew neither dull, morose nor pragmatical, but was cheerful as morning, loving the sunshine rather than the shade, and sympathetic with the happiness of others, fully appreciating the wisdom of the inspired maxim, that "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Frugal, temperate, and self-regulated, he was as free from asceticism as he was from world-worship. Young people never felt his presence an unwelcome restraint, and conversation was enlivened by his sprightly reminiscences and witty pleasantries.

"If he had an anxiety, as age grew upon him, it was that he should lose this blessing of a happy temper, and torpor of mind or physical infirmity unfit him for active service. On my remonstrating with him, one day, for his undertaking the labor of collecting funds in aid of Rutgers College, a task which he might have been spared, he answered me, that he thought he could yet do something for the institution he loved so well, and that he was also anxious to do himself good, as he observed that imbecility came sooner on those people who gave up active exertion, and he was anxious never to be a burden, even upon those most ready to minister to his comfort. Dear old man! his heart and flesh did fail toward the close of his venerable life, but God

Digitized by Google

was the strength of his heart, and is now his 'portion forever.'

"Such is my estimation of his character and spirit. I had not many opportunities of being with him, and now regret that I did not make for myself more, but am thankful that he knew, as God knows, that I loved him very much. Doubtless he made errors and had faults, but it was not my lot to find out what they were. It is not painful to think that he is dead, for it was time for the sleep of his wearied frame; but it is joyful to know that he lives with God, and is beholding the glory of the Master whom he delighted to serve. God grant us to see him again, where the eye is never dim, and 'the sun never goes down!'

"GEORGE W. BETHUNE.

"BROOKLYN, January 8, 1859."

Such was PETER LABAGH. His life, labors and character are before the reader. He has followed him, through his long pilgrimage of more than four score years, from the cradle to the tomb. "The dust has at length returned to the earth as it was: and the spirit has returned unto God who gave it." But to all who knew him, and to all who shall read these pages, there is a voice that speaks from his example on earth, and from his reward in heaven, and reiterates the cheering but solemn words of the prophet: "They

Digitized by Google

that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

The writer's task is done. And he knows not in what terms more appropriate to close this humble tribute to the memory of an honored servant of Christ, than those in which the friend and chaplain of Bishop Horne concludes the preface to his memoir: "I have heard it said, and I was a little discouraged by it, that he was a person whose life was not productive of *events* considerable enough to furnish matter for a history. But they who judge thus, have taken but a superficial view of human life, and do not rightly measure the importance of the different events which happen to different sorts of men. He was, I must allow, no circumnavigator; he neither sailed with Drake, Anson, nor Cooke; but he was a man whose mind surveyed the intellectual world, and brought home from thence many excellent observations for the benefit of his native country. He was no military commander; he took no cities; he conquered no countries; but he spent his life in subduing his passions, and in teaching us how to do the same. He fought no battles by land or by sea; but he opposed the enemies of God and his truth, and obtained some victories which are worthy to be recorded. He was no prime minister to any earthly

Digitized by Google

potentate; but he was a minister to the King of heaven and earth; an office at least as useful to mankind, and in the administration of which no minister to any earthly king ever exceeded him in zeal and fidelity. He made no splendid discoveries in natural history; but he did what was better; he applied universal nature to the improvement of the mind and the illustration of heavenly doctrines. I call these *events:* not such as make a great noise and signify little, but such as are little celebrated, and of great signification. The same difference is found between him and some other men who have been the subject of history, as between the life of the bee and that of the wasp or hornet. The latter may boast of their encroachments and depredations, and value themselves on being a plague and a terror to mankind. But let it rather be my amusement to follow and observe the motions of the bee. Her journeys are always pleasant; the objects of her attention are beautiful to the eye, and she passes none of them over without examining what is to be extracted from them; her workmanship is admirable; her economy is a lesson of wisdom to the world; she may be accounted 'little among them that fly,' but the fruit of her labor is the 'chief of sweet things.'"

Digitized by Google

"The good old man is gone!
He lies in his saintly rest,
And his labors all are done
And the work that he loved the best.
The good old man is gone —
But the dead in the Lord are blessed!

I stood in the holy aisle,
When he spake the solemn word,
That bound him, through care and toil,
The servant of the Lord:
And I saw how the depths of his manly soul
By that sacred vow were stirred.

And nobly his pledge he kept —
For the truth he stood up alone,
And his spirit never slept,
And his march was ever *on!*
Oh! deeply and long shall his loss be wept,
The brave old man that's gone.

The wise old man is gone!
His honored head lies low,
And his thoughts of power are done,
And his voice's manly flow,
And the pen, that for truth like a sword was drawn,
Is still and soulless now.

The good old man is gone!
He is gone to his saintly rest,
Where no sorrow can be known,
And no trouble can molest:
For his crown of immortal life is won,
And the dead in Christ are blessed!"

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX A.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SYNOD OF THE GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH.

ALLUSION has already been made on page 67 of the Memoir, to the action of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, at its annual session held in the city of Philadelphia, in June, 1853, discontinuing its correspondence with the Synod of the German Reformed Church, and to the grounds upon which it was based. Similar action in regard to its own correspondence with the German Synod was taken on similar grounds by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Old School, at its annual session, held in the city of Buffalo, in May, 1854. In the proceedings of the last named body, as reported in *The Presbyterian* of June 3, 1854, we find the following:

"The committee to nominate delegates to foreign bodies, reported the following in reference to corresponding with the German Reformed Church:

"*Resolved*, That without intending hereby to deny, as a general principle governing their sister Churches, that their formally acknowledged creeds and symbols of faith are to be taken as the true representatives of the doctrinal views of the ministers and people of any Church, in the official action of this Assembly in relation to them; yet, in view of the peculiar position of the General Synod of the German Reformed Church towards the Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, whose professors have so notoriously become antagonistic

Digitized by Google

to Protestantism, and lest a continuance of our correspondence might be understood as countenancing the fundamental errors which they are laboring to disseminate, and lest we be regarded as disapproving the course of those in that communion who have so nobly contended against them, a respectable number of whom we learn have wholly withdrawn from the General Synod on account of the alarming prevalence of these errors in that body; therefore, the General Assembly will suspend its correspondence with the General Synod of the German Reformed Church, and decline sending a delegate to that body.

"So much of the report as refers to the nomination of delegates, was adopted, and the resolution in reference to the German Reformed Church was put upon the docket."

When it is considered, on the one hand, that the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church took the initiative in the serious and responsible action, by which the bonds of ecclesiastical fellowship between sister churches were dissolved; and, on the other, that the German Reformed Church, if misjudged and misrepresented in regard to the doctrines and spirit which she really maintained and cherished, was held up before the Christian world to unmerited condemnation and reproach; it will at once be seen that the obligations of simple justice demand that both sides should have a full and candid hearing. Without venturing to express an opinion upon the merits of the controversy, if such it may be called, we desire therefore only to refer the reader to the subjoined documents containing the official action, respectively, of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, and of the Synod of the German Reformed Church.

At the meeting of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, in Philadelphia, in June, 1853, the committee on correspondence, consisting of the Rev. Thos. M. Strong, D.D., and the Rev. Messrs. Theodore F. Wyckoff, and James H. M. Knox, and the elders,

Digitized by Google

Samuel Groves and Clarkson F. Crosby, presented their report, which was accepted and unanimously adopted. So far as it relates to the Synod of the German Reformed Church, it is in the following words:

"From the Minutes of the Synod of the German Reformed Church, your committee learn that that branch of the visible kingdom of Christ are engaged with becoming interest to advance the various causes of benevolence and of religious progress. While a goodly number of students are in attendance upon their Theological Seminary, a new location has been obtained for their literary College, which has commenced its operations with flattering prospects. A spirit of liberality in promoting the great causes of missions and education is manifested, and seems to be increasing among their people.

"It appears, however, from the report of a committee to whom was referred the Minutes of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, that they feel aggrieved at the report presented by the delegates from this Synod to the meeting of their Synod held in the month of October, 1851, and by the action of the General Synod thereon. The committee declare that, 'with a single exception,' the report of our delegates 'does not contain a single statement in accordance with actual facts.' This is a very grave and sweeping charge. An attempt is made to sustain it by quite a long course of remark. On the other hand, in the reply of the delegates from this Synod, they reïterate the main facts as contained in their report to the Synod, and affirm them to be true; while they adduce evidence to show that they could not have been mistaken in relation thereto. Your committee do not feel themselves obliged to enter upon any enlarged statement or inquiry into the matters of alleged difference in this case. They cannot, however, but think that, while the brethren of the German Reformed Synod regard the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, in their action on

Digitized by Google

the report of their delegates, as 'violating the principles of Christian courtesy and charity,' the expressions and implications contained in the report of their own committee, adopted by them, are a far greater violation of these 'principles.' The Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, by their appointment of these delegates and by their action on their report, have shown their entire confidence in the integrity of these brethren, and your committee have seen nothing calculated in any degree to weaken this confidence, either in their character or statements of facts. If, however, as it now appears, the plan of correspondence between the two Churches as now maintained may be the occasion of offense—may infringe upon the 'principles of Christian courtesy,' and tend in some degree to alienate brethren from each other (an issue entirely at variance with the spirit and design of such correspondence), it may be advisable to suspend, if not abandon it.

"But, in the providence of God, there is a still higher cause for the adoption of such a course. The Synod of the German Reformed Church complain of the action of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, inasmuch as it contains an intimation that they have departed from the faith once delivered to the saints. The particular points referred to are those which may be characterized as having a Romanizing tendency. It is known by all who are conversant with the events of the day, that certain most objectionable and erroneous doctrines and sentiments have been advocated and propagated by the professors of the Theological Seminary, and by certain other prominent ministers and members of that Church, as well as by the accredited organ of the Synod. These sentiments relate to the great cardinal doctrine of justification by faith through the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; to the only rule of faith and practice—the right of private judgment, the nature and efficacy of the sacraments, the authority of the Church, and other doctrines of a kindred character. These

Digitized by Google

sentiments are most palpably Romanizing in their nature and tendency: and accordingly, they have been approved by the organs of the Roman Catholic Church, and the authors of them commended and encouraged to go on in their progress; while, on the other hand, they have been condemned in the strongest language by the religious press of almost, if not quite all, the other Protestant Churches in our land. They have been regarded by all who hold to the 'old paths' as essential departures from the faith once delivered to the saints. And yet your committee are not aware that the individuals who have advocated these Romanistic and dangerous sentiments have been called to account by the authorities of the German Reformed Church, or that the sentiments themselves have been repudiated or formally condemned in an open, decided and unequivocal manner, by the Synod of the Church. This amounts to a tacit connivance with, if not a virtual approval of, these erroneous views—views which strike at the vitality of the truth as maintained by the Protestant Church; for their attachment to which the Reformers came out of the Church of Rome, and in the defence of which they so faithfully and zealously labored. Adherence to the truths assailed by the views to which we have referred, has ever been one of the most prominent characteristics of the Protestant Church. But in this age, when the Church of Rome is making such vigorous and concerted efforts to spread the doctrines of her corrupt communion; when many have been perverted thereby, and some individuals of distinction from the ranks of Protestantism have connected themselves with that Church; and when so much anxiety is very justly felt by the friends of evangelical truth in relation to these matters; it is the duty of the several branches of the Protestant Church who still hold to the peculiar doctrines of the Reformation, to protest in the strongest manner against any and every sentiment which favors the views and designs of Rome. And certainly the Reformed Dutch Church, which

Digitized by Google

has always stood among the foremost and firmest of the advocates of truth, should not be backward or mild in their protest against such doctrines. Nay, your committee believe that the time has come, in the providence of God, when they should not do any thing that might have the aspect in any way of countenancing in the remotest degree the fatal errors of the Church of Rome. And even if, in their action in this matter, they should lay themselves open to a charge of 'violating the principles of Christian charity,' still they should not hesitate to pursue this course. The interests of truth and the honor of the Master are far more important than what might by some be regarded as the courtesies of Christian charity. The Apostle tells us that, while 'charity suffereth long and is kind,' yet 'it rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.'

"In view of the whole circumstances in which, in the providence of God, the Synod are now placed, your committee recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

"1. *Resolved,* That this Synod entertain unabated confidence in the integrity and truthfulness of the delegates who were appointed to attend the meeting of the Synod of the German Reformed Church, which was held in the month of October, 1851, and cannot believe that they could be guilty of making any intentional misstatements of facts in the report of their attendance upon the Synod of the German Reformed Church.

"2. *Resolved,* That this Synod feel themselves called upon, as representing one of the branches of the great Protestant family, to maintain unflinchingly and firmly the entire faith once delivered to the saints, and to avoid the doing of any thing which may actually or by implication give the sanction of their name to any of the erroneous doctrines of the Church of Rome, or any sentiments which may in any way favor the corrupt tenets of the Mother of Abominations.

"3. *Resolved,* That this Synod do hereby express, in the most

Digitized by Google

decided and unequivocal manner, their protest against all those sentiments of a Romanizing character and tendency, which are technically known as the 'Mercersburg Theology,' as being essential departures from the faith, as calculated to lead yet farther astray from the old landmarks of the truth, and to undermine the great principles of the Reformation from Popery.

"4. *Resolved,* That, inasmuch as the correspondence with the German Reformed Church has been the occasion, in the opinion of that body, of 'violating the principles of Christian courtesy and charity," and as the continuance of the same may be regarded as lending the sanction of this Synod to sentiments and doctrines which are favorable to the corrupt views of the Church of Rome, which are advocated by many persons of distinguished character in the German Reformed Church, and have not been repudiated by the authorities of said Church; and as an expression of the decided disapprobation on the part of this Synod of any such views and sentiments, and a strong protest against the same, the Synod hereby declares that the correspondence between them and the Synod of the German Reformed Church is from this time forth suspended."

To this action the Synod of the German Reformed Church responded, at its meeting in Philadelphia, in October, 1853. The proceedings of the Synod, so far as they relate to the termination of the correspondence with the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, are recorded in the published Minutes as follows:

"General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.

"The delegates to this body submitted the following report:

"The undersigned, appointed as corresponding delegates to the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, respectfully report,

"That they were present, during several days, at the meeting of

Digitized by Google

that Synod, which took place in the city of Philadelphia in the month of June last. The usual business claimed attention. The most important item having reference to the German Reformed Church, was that of the discontinuance of the correspondence with our Synod. The reasons assigned for reaching the result they did are given at length in their published Minutes. It will therefore be unnecessary to advert to them here. We would simply add, that your delegates, in their parting addresses, endeavored faithfully, yet in as kind and respectful language as they knew how to employ, to explain and defend the position of our Synod, and to vindicate the character of the German Reformed Church as the Church of the Heidelberg Catechism, against the aspersions that were attempted to be heaped upon her in this direction.

"Respectfully submitted,

"HENRY HARBAUGH.
"SAMUEL R. FISHER.

"The report was referred to a committee consisting of the Rev. Charles F. Mc Cauley, Jacob Sechler, Isaac Gerhart, Samuel Helffenstein, D.D., Israel S. Weisz, N. S. Strassburger, John C. Hensell, Frederick A. Rupley, Peter S. Fisher, Franklin W. Kremer, Daniel F. Brendle, and Elders George Besore and William Mayburry. This committee submitted the following report, which was unanimously adopted:

"The committee, to whom was referred the report of the delegates to the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, beg leave respectfully to submit the following report:

"Your committee learn from the report placed in their hands, that the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, at their late meeting held in this city, discontinued their correspondence with our Synod. It was due to this Synod, even as an act of common courtesy, that official notice of this discontinuance should have been communicated by the proper authorities of the Reformed Dutch Church. This, however, has not been done, and we have accordingly had no other

Digitized by Google

official knowledge of their action than is furnished by the report and statements of our delegates. The correspondence was commenced forty years ago, at the request of the Dutch Church. Our Synod most cordially entered into the arrangement, and has continued to comply with the rules of correspondence, in the hope that in this way something might be contributed towards bringing about the unity of the Church, which the Lord so explicitly teaches as necessary, and for which he so earnestly prays. Receiving the Scriptures as we do, with implicit faith, Synod could not but feel deeply impressed with the necessity of aiming at promoting this end in all its proceedings. A review of these proceedings satisfies your committee, that the course of Synod has ever been of a fraternal character towards the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, but they regret to say, that a reciprocal kindness has not always been experienced by our body. On the contrary, there has been an evident attempt, in many instances, on the part of the brethren of the Reformed Dutch Church, during the last ten years, to interfere in matters that concerned us alone. In some cases, no doubt, our movements have been modified by such influence, and in those instances in which Synod has shown herself unwilling to yield her rights, we have been made, in a private way at least, to feel that we have by far too much independence to meet with the approbation of those who have so long condescended to evince towards us a patronizing air.

"Your committee regard the action of the late Synod of the Dutch Church as a matter to be regretted, not so much on account of any loss we may be thought to have sustained as a body, as because of the injury suffered in common with the Church as a whole. So far as our denominational interests are concerned, the connection has been one of loss only, and it is not to be wondered at that some of the brethren long since considered the arrogant and presumptuous conduct of that Synod as calling for a demand on our

Digitized by Google

part to have the correspondence broken off. But Synod as a body could not entertain such an idea, because it would have been schismatic, and as such, contrary to the principles of Christian charity and the word of God. The Dutch Church can take to herself the entire credit (not to mention their abrupt withdrawal from the Triennial Convention), of interrupting the correspondence carried on so many years in friendship. This step was taken by them in a most irregular way. One year ago, our Synod in Baltimore filed exceptions to the course taken by their corresponding delegates of the previous year, who allowed themselves so far to transcend the privileges extended in the way of Christian courtesy, as to sit in judgment on our orthodoxy. And not only so, but in connection with their decision, they reported misrepresentations of the action of Synod touching the whole matter. In the exceptions filed, the Synod at Baltimore noticed these features of the case at length, in the hope that the Synod of the Dutch Church would be disposed readily to do justice to those whom they had aggrieved unwittingly, as was supposed. But your committee regret to say, that they have added insult to injury. They have endeavored to justify their course by aspersing our Church in the most unkind manner. By this we are now assured that the act of their Synod in the city of Williamsburg was not a matter of haste, but a deliberate attempt to assert their right to sit as the judge and guardian of the German Reformed Church. In this respect your committee regard the action of the Dutch Church as the most unwarranted assumption of which we can well conceive — an assumption to which perhaps they were led by our forbearance thus far. But whilst this Synod, from time to time, bore with much patience their dictatorial interference, it never once was intended to admit that that interference was justifiable. It tolerated their conduct as that of weak brethren, with whom it is a Christian duty to use great forbearance.

"In their late Synod in this city they gravely charge us with

Digitized by Google

having done what 'amounts to a tacit connivance with, if not a virtual approval of views which strike at the vitality of the truth as maintained by the Protestant Church.' This your committee regard as an unqualified slander, and one which has already redounded to the merited disgrace of the source whence it sprang. The doctrines and sentiments charged upon our professors and others, but which they disclaim *in toto*, are doctrines and sentiments in regard to which this Synod has never felt itself called upon to sit in judgment, and to which it has never given 'a virtual approval.' The genius of our Church allows diversity in non-essentials. And that there is some difference among us on points not affecting the great plan of salvation is not to be denied. The absence of such diversity would argue the want of manly and independent thought. Diversity in unity, is a privilege enjoyed by the ministers and membership of our Church, and we never contracted to barter our birthright for a mess of pottage, nor could our brethren of the Dutch Church have reasonably expected it.

"Yet, because we did not catch at their suggestions, condemn our brethren unheard upon mere rumor, and constitute ourselves into a heresy-hunting and modern anti-popery society, they issue their anathema with all the array of power displayed in a papal malediction, and in all the self-righteous spirit of one of old, who prayed, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' And in addition to this, they instruct all other branches of the Church to follow as they lead off. The course thus taken, your committee find to be entirely in violation of the spirit and letter of the terms of correspondence. And the act itself is without foundation; for the Church stands now as it ever has done since the days of the Reformation, unshaken, by the Scriptures as expounded in the Heidelberg Catechism. In view of the whole subject as thus presented, your committee recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

Digitized by Google

"1. *Resolved*, That, feeling with 'the father of the faithful,' the disgrace caused by the existence of strife between his herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot in the presence of the Canaanite and Perizzite, we acquiesce in the discontinuance of correspondence with the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.

"2. *Resolved*, That notwithstanding the grievances inflicted upon us by that body, we still cherish towards them the spirit of love and forbearance enjoined by our blessed Saviour."

This report was signed by all the members of the committee, whose names have already been given above.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX B.

Connection with the American Board.

As the connection of the Reformed Dutch Church with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, referred to on page 188 of the Memoir, forms an important part, not only of her history at home, but also of the history of her missionary operations in foreign lands, the facts in the case are thought to lie so far within the scope of the present volume as to justify the transfer to its pages of the official papers embodying the action by which the General Synod and the American Board, in the most friendly spirit, dissolved the relation which had so long subsisted between them. It has already been stated on a previous page that the dissolution was decided upon by the General Synod at its meeting at Ithaca, New York, in June, 1857. The report then submitted by the committee on Foreign Missions, and adopted by the Synod with but little opposition, so far as it relates to the subject before us, is in the following words:

"It appears that last year a very able report, traversing this whole subject in all its parts, was, by the unanimous vote of our Board of Foreign Missions, submitted to the General Synod. The Synod's committee reported favorably on the proposed change; but after discussion the whole question was postponed to this year, and

Digitized by Google

now comes up for final action. The report of our Board for 1857 does not retract their unanimous opinion given in 1856, but merely cites the language of one of the resolutions passed by the A. B. C. F. M. at Newark, in October last, which it says renders null the reason for separation founded upon the point of 'ecclesiastical organization.' But this point was 'only incidental;' the weight of the question was placed upon other grounds. The action, therefore, of the American Board, last October, has not touched the essential elements of the case; these still exist in all their original integrity. They are thus given in the masterly report of 1856: understood to be from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Ferris:

"'I. If, as a Church, we are to do any thing effectually in the great work of Foreign Missions, we need a mode of action which shall bring the responsibility directly home to our people, and this an independent operation is most likely to secure.

"'II. We are able to conduct this department of church work for ourselves, and should, therefore, undertake it.

"'III. The Church is ready for and desires a distinct and separate organization.

"'IV. It is regarded as not a small consideration, that such separate action on a prominent branch of Christian benevolence will complete the organizations which the great interests of the Church call for.'

"'First. *If, as a Church, we are to do any thing effectually in the great work of Foreign Missions, we need a mode of action which shall bring the responsibility directly home to our people, and this an independent operation is most likely to secure.*'

"All Christians agree that to preach the Gospel to every creature is an absolute duty—made such by the highest authority in the Church—its Head. The circumstances of time and place, when he uttered his charge, give special solemnity to this duty, while the blessings vouchsafed to the efforts to diffuse the proclamation of

Digitized by Google

mercy show how pleasing it is in his sight. Each Christian individually, and each distinct ecclesiastical organization, has here a most important part to act, and each is bound to that mode of action which shall most certainly bring every energy to the work. It is a vast work, and the Christian influence, and prayers, and charities of each are called for—every heart should be awake, every right agency called in

"Now, it is believed to be true, in the prosecution of all interests, that the most effectual mode of calling out and bringing to bear the moral power of an individual, or a body of men, is the fastening responsibility on them directly, and as far as may be, personally. Individualizing the man or the body, bringing each to confront direct and positive claims, taxes the conscience and draws upon the Christian sympathies in a way that will call out the desirable response. When an object is remote, when business passes through second hands and distant hands, and responsibility is removed, our infirm nature is prone to fall into indifference, or will feel little. Others have charge of the active movements, others impel the car; the subsidiary agency is distant from all the points of conflict and difficulty, and hence will ordinarily be cold and listless, or a philosophical action may be kept up without power and vitality. The confirmation and illustration of this are seen in the history of all our charitable associations. The more direct the responsibility the more decided and earnest will be the effort.

"By the present arrangement in conducting Missions our place is simply subsidiary. Other counsels manage, other hands execute; responsibility for vigilance, and oversight, and prompt action is removed several stages from us. All means go to another treasury, and its disbursement calls out no care—scarce an inquiry. We assume it all to be right, and it is happy in the circumstances that it is and will be right, and we know no more. And then, if difficulties arise, they fall elsewhere. If there be deficiency, we do not

Digitized by Google

feel it. There is a ready answer to all urgency: 'O, if we do not furnish the means, others will,' and thus a double injury results; the withholding of benefactions being the less, and the positive moral torpifying influence the greater.

"It cannot be said our Church has done nothing. On the contrary, there has been a constant, if not a large stream, making its meandering way to the great reservoir. But to those who know her it is obvious she has done far less than her position and resources would lead us to look for. In short, far less than she ought to have done, and to be doing. About the time of the departure of the first missionary family there was a high degree of feeling, and the interest was widely diffused, and it may be a question whether to the impetus then given we are not indebted for what has since been done, only occasional circumstances having come in to keep up the momentum. Such is the constitutional characteristic of our people, that having begun an undertaking, they pursue it, as a habit, even though the interest taken be not lively—a capital trait to rely on, but one which should be improved for the accomplishment of the highest results.

"At present, where is there animation and energy in the good cause? Does this Board possess either? Is not the Board very much a cypher, and made such by its position? What is the meaning of the fact that it has held one meeting a year? Has it not been felt that we have nothing to do? Of what worth can such a body be? And what feeling pervades the Church? Is it the quickened feeling of a high sense of responsibility? Do the hearts of our people warm towards the great subject as their own? Does it not seem as if the prevalent feeling was, that the interest of the affair lies over East, beyond the boundary of our own State, and only concerned our people secondarily?

"If this is so, we need a change in our mode of action, such a change as will bring close before our mental view and very near

Digitized by Google

our hearts the necessities which call for Christian help. We need an operation which shall lay responsibility upon every conscience directly, which shall draw hard, and constantly, and largely on our piety—something which shall waken all to the Lord's work among the perishing, whose cry may come to the heart fresh through as few mediums as possible.

"It is believed that a distinct and separate conduct of Foreign Missions will tend much to secure this end. It cannot be said that this will be unfailing, for there will be, doubtless, always, while Christians are what they are, drones in the Christian hive; but the claim set up is—this will be the most hopeful means of attaining what we desire. Under it we may hope to see portions of the Church, now inactive, become earnest, and those which have settled down into a supine state awaken to new life, as they would be made to feel that the whole weight of our missionary work was on them.

"'SECONDLY. *We are able to conduct this department of Church work for ourselves, and should, therefore, undertake it.*'

"It is a grave question whether moral responsibility can be transferred from oneself to others without culpability. Certain it is, it cannot occur where there is full ability and abundant opportunity to do one's work. Each man must answer directly for any failure to meet the Divine requirement. What is positively required must be as positively met. If there be inability or insufficient opportunities, these may be pleaded in bar of judgment, but then the evidence must be adequate to the plea.

"In the work of which we speak, neither of these can be urged, and our duty remains; the claims are urgent and inalienable.

"The proper inquiry is, what is the ability needed in the independent management of Foreign Missions? Two things are embraced, we would reply: the pecuniary resources to be expended, and the men of intellect, integrity and sound judgment to take the oversight.

Digitized by Google

"That we have the former is manifest from the history of the past. Let us suppose that there is merely a transfer of the Missions where our brethren are engaged to our immediate care—have not the means necessary for their support been realized from our Churches? If our people only do as they have done, will there be any fear of failure? From the Annual Reports of the Treasurers of our Board since 1832, it appears that $203,916 56 have been contributed, which, after deducting a comparatively small sum for the occasional agencies of our commissioned or returned missionaries, and incidental expenses (say not exceeding $5,000), in the twenty-four years, have gone into the treasury of the American Board. On the other hand, the American Board, as appears from the Annual Reports, has expended on our Missions and missionary brethren $131,367 44, to which may be probably added some $10,000 for sums appropriated to Dr. Abeel and Dr. Scudder, which have not been presented separately, but are included in aggregates of the Missions where they were. Here, then, we see that not only has the Church furnished what was necessary for her own sons, but aided in a considerable sum in the blessed work of making other hearts glad.

"No special urgency has been applied in what has been accomplished; and may we not conclude that what has been done can be done? The Church's means have not been exhausted. On the lowest supposition which we can make, if no more effort is put forth, and no greater ability is enjoyed, and our Missions remain the same in point of number and expensiveness, we should fear no saddening issue.

"But who of us for a moment believes that the pecuniary ability of the Church does not warrant the fair hope of much more under a proper influence? God has highly blessed our people with the good things of this world. A full cup—eminent prosperity has been theirs. The Church, besides, has grown and expanded very

Digitized by Google

decidedly within twenty-five years. In 1829 the Stated Clerk of General Synod gave a list of our ministers as numbering 149, when our churches also were 184. In 1855 he publishes, in the Minutes of General Synod, that there are 348 ministers and 364 churches—a noticeable increase. With this expansion there has been proportionate growth of strength. It would be ungrateful to our benign Benefactor to deny, with this before us, that much more might be accomplished, if we had the proper spirit. Our Missions might be multiplied, new fields might be occupied and all requisite support would be furnished.

"It should not be forgotten that quite a large proportion of our churches have done very little or nothing for our Foreign Missions, while none have exercised self-denial in what they have given. It is reasonable to believe that many now and heretofore inactive, under a more direct action would come up to this work, and thus we may fairly calculate on having new channels of beneficence opened.

"It is true, under an independent organization there would be additional expenditure incurred; but this, including every form of expense, would not be large—certainly not exceeding two thousand dollars (and this is an outside estimate), which would be more than made up by the new resources which would be secured. It should be remembered in this connection that much service is constantly rendered simply from love for the cause of religion. The members of our Boards (among them men of active business, whose time is very valuable), the Recording and Corresponding Secretaries and Treasurers, receive no pecuniary compensation. What would be requisite, then, would be incidental to the collection and transmission of money. If more should be required through the occupancy of new fields, the Providence which opened the door would furnish the means.

"As to the *second* requisite—our having men of intellect, in-

Digitized by Google

tegrity and judgment to manage missionary matters—we think there can be no doubt. The Foreign Missionary work has peculiarities, and these must be fully understood in order to be provided for, but the same class of mind which elsewhere does the work is found among ourselves. We are not aware that there is any evidence, in any enterprise of the Church conducted by our brethren, of any deficiency of executive or administrative talent. We think the position of our institutions and our general interests is sufficient to satisfy at least ourselves of what our brethren are adequate to perform.

"High praise is to be accorded to the distinguished men who have been and are in charge of the operations of the American Board. We love and honor them—they are our friends and brethren. We are not to forget concerning them that actual contact with their special duties has fitted them for their work. And the same, we may hope, will be the case with our own brethren in the same circumstances.

"In a new enterprise we must allow for some friction, but very soon every desirable adjustment will be secured. Certain it is that as we now are, our brethren will, in no cases, ever acquire that familiarity with the practical details of missionary management which will be called for, if hereafter, at any time, we are to go alone. No man among us supposes we shall always act through the present agency. Will we, then, act prematurely, if we take measures to bring about an organization to which we all look forward, and for which we shall need the qualifications which may be attained while our Missions are few, and compact, and well arranged? Let us allow that mistakes may be committed, so it occurs in all departments, for none are infallible; yet we have no reason to anticipate any which united councils may not correct or modify.

"And then shall we be cut off from the benefit of the advice of

Digitized by Google

our brethren in the missionary work in other denominations? Shall we, because of separate and distinct operations, be divorced from all the good offices of the brethren with whom we have so pleasantly and so long acted? We ought to have no fears here.

"Such is the general acquaintance with the missionary work, we have read so much, heard so much, and seen so much of the movements around us, that we have confidence that we might look for the Divine blessing on our distinct efforts as a Church, and that every year would see the circle of duty becoming more and more a training school for securing higher results.

"After this review, we may ask, On what ground can we put away from us, as a Church, the obligation to preach the Gospel directly to the perishing? Having all the ability, pecuniary, and intellectual, and pious, which is necessary, can we without culpability ask other persons to do our work? Will it not be a more serious reflection than to go alone and not accomplish so much at the outset, or commit some mistakes in our first efforts?

"The circumstances of our Church, twenty-four years ago, were such as to make the union then formed very desirable, and almost the only feasible mode of action. We have since been rapidly gaining strength and position. Our Church plans have been advanced to a higher point, and we are better fitted in every respect to go forward in every legitimate church enterprise. Shall we not do it for our own sake—shall we not do it for the sake of truth and human good?

"'THIRDLY. *The Church is ready for and desires the separate and distinct organization.*' When the present arrangement was made, it had the warm and earnest interest of a large majority of the Church. Cases there were of brethren who were adverse, but they preferred to be silent and see the plan fully tried. They were willing, for the sake of the cause, that the friends of the Union should realize all that was practicable under it.

Digitized by Google

"It was about four years after this when the subject of separation came up before the Synod, and it was referred to this Board to express its judgment in the premises. That was decidedly and strongly in favor of the continuance of the present plan, based especially on the consideration that we had so recently formed it, and hence could not pronounce on its efficiency; and also that we had sought it, and so soon to abandon it would reflect on us as a denomination.

"In the progress of succeeding years the feeling has gained strength that the Church should do her own work; that it was derogatory to throw into other hands, and those of strangers, the oversight and care of our sons. This, from all we can gather, seems to be the prevailing sentiment. It is true that no ecclesiastical action has given form to the views entertained, yet there have been frequent conferences of brethren in which this has been expressed. Among those who desire the independent form of action, are some of our best and most influential men, and those who have not withheld their hand from effort.

"It is proper to say that the reasons given vary. But by far the larger number take the broad and high Christian ground, that the Church as such can only be true to her duty to her Head, by doing her appointed work for herself, as he has blessed her with the means and opportunities.

"It is not to be concealed that there is a growing disinclination for what have been called voluntary associations, and a tendency to ecclesiastical responsibility, and, where ministers are concerned, a marked conviction that their position should be decided, and controlled by ecclesiastical action, where they have the right of appeal, and not by committees.

"But whatever the considerations which have moved the minds of our brethren, it is believed that there is an extensive readiness

Digitized by Google

for separate action, and that the Church will come promptly and liberally to its maintenance.

"'FOURTHLY.—*It is regarded as not a small consideration, that such separate action on a great branch of Christian benevolence will complete the organizations which the great interests of the Church call for.*'

"It is conceded on all sides that we must take care of ourselves. If we have nothing to which we attach importance, nothing worth preserving in our principles and polity, then is there no call for solicitude or wakefulness or effort. But this is not the case, as all our efforts to meet various forms of want clearly show. The Church has felt that she must perpetuate her ministry, secure her own sons for her pastoral fields, while she would not close the door on others, and hence she has attended specially to her educational interests, and provided for the exigencies of such as need aid. She has ever been known for her solicitude for a well-trained ministry,—one trained in the truth; hence she has her School of the Prophets. Her feeling has deepened in behalf of her own children and the strangers from other lands, and especially from the fatherland, diffused over a vastly extended country; hence she has her Domestic Missionary Board. She has a sympathy for her disabled or poorly sustained ministry, and the families of her deceased sons; accordingly she has her Sustentation and Widows' Funds. She has more recently, in her highest judicatory, with entire unanimity, decided that she would furnish her families with a sound Christian literature, and hence she instituted her Board of Publication. And now to complete the circle of provision for great interests, she only needs her distinct operations for Foreign Missions.

"If one of the fathers who fell asleep some thirty-five years or forty years ago should arise, how different a Church would he find in all the points of true Christian usefulness from that which he left, while every where he would hear the same truth, and observe the same Church order maintained. And how cheering would he

Digitized by Google

regard the prospect, as he saw on every side so many young men, and so many in the vigor of life engaged in the Church's service! The mind cannot rest on the present attitude of our denomination as a tribe in the Christian Israel, without gratified feeling. Never before did we stand so strong, never so happily caparisoned for the work of the Master. We are a united Church; we have a noble band of men under the middle line of life, and others coming up, well trained and glowing with zeal, who will not be behind their brethren. We may well complete the group of agencies, that they may labor with better advantage, and carry on what the fathers have begun, to a higher degree of success and usefulness.

"If it should be asked whether, on the principles stated, we must have our organizations for distinct classes or descriptions of men, the reply would be, that provision should be made for these under those now enjoyed. There is no incongruity in having a domestic missionary for the Jews in our land, or a domestic chaplain for seamen in our ports, under the care of our Domestic Board, and the same under our Foreign Board for those abroad. And as to the department of Publication, there are not a few who believe, as they scan the signs of the times, and note how the entering wedge of distracting discussion has been employed, that we may soon have stronger reasons for believing the organization of a Board of Publication most timely.

"It may be said this whole view tends to make us exclusive, but this is not necessarily so. There is nothing to call out an unkind feeling towards others, nothing to interrupt the comities which should prevail among Christians. It does not follow that because a man keeps up good enclosures, and supplies himself with all desirable instrumentalities to do well the work of his own domain, therefore he is estranged from his neighbor, or must look coldly on his condition and progress, and cannot unite with him in working on the common highway. In maintaining distinctly all we regard

Digitized by Google

important in doctrinal views and order, if our course is a right one, we shall cultivate more and more the Christian spirit, and we shall find much in which we shall coöperate, and may wish God speed to all right minded, earnest men, though they bear not our commissions.

"It may also be said, why separate when our relation is so happy, and so much harmony prevails? The reply is, if there be duty in the case or responsibility, such as has been affirmed, then, when there is such good feeling and harmony, is the time to make a required separation. It is a grievous reflection that many Churches grow out of bitter controversies and deeply seated enmities. This is far from being honorable to the piety of those concerned. Still, if they cannot live together, they had better live apart. But what blessings can be looked for where the seeds of strife are sown broadcast? There is something pleasant, something that accords with every principle of the Gospel, for brethren who feel that they must have larger place, that they owe a better service to the Master and to man, to leave what may be called the home circle, with all its endearments, to enter upon a wider field. It is the young swarm going out from the parent hive, to carry on its honey-gathering labor under new auspices. There ought to be a state of kindness when such partings occur. We shall need each other's kind offices; we shall be called at times to work side by side for our Divine Lord.

"So, again, it may be said we lose the benefit resulting from participation in so large a work as that of the American Board, and the opportunity of bringing to bear upon the hearts of our people those glorious results from time to time secured. We acknowledge this will be true in a degree; we acknowledge the advantage of being able to draw from the large and accumulating treasury of delightful and touching incidents gathered from a wide missionary field; we acknowledge there will be a loss felt by numbers who have mingled in the scenes of the great Annual Convocation, and

Digitized by Google

listened to the Annual Report, a document more important than almost any annual state paper, and borne away the thrilling emotions and deep convictions of the importance of the missionary work which the occasion induced. But allowing all this, the question is, what does duty dictate? Is this not a case in which duty calls for the self-denial involved? But, after all, the missionary work is one, however numerous its branches or departments. We shall still be sharers with our brethren in the joy of their success. All that is done by God's people of every name is ours. It is our privilege to cull from all fields whatever may minister to the interest of our people, whatever may arouse to duty and aid in the coming of the kingdom of our blessed Lord.

"The committee recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

"1. *Resolved*, That, considering the growth of our missions abroad, the duty of the Church, in her distinctive capacity, as such, to take charge of these missions, the growing sentiment among our people in favor of such a course, and the hopeful prospect that this action will tend to call out far more largely and promptly the resources of our denomination, we are satisfied that the time has come to dissolve the union with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and henceforth conduct our operations among the heathen through the exclusive agency of our own Board.

"2. *Resolved*, That the intimate relation which has existed for a quarter of a century between the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church and the A. B. C. F. M., in the prosecution of this work, has confirmed our confidence in the wisdom, the integrity and the catholic spirit of that great and noble institution; nor shall we ever cease to feel a lively interest in the growth of its operations and the success of its plans.

"3. *Resolved*, That in dissolving the pleasant and useful connection we have maintained with the officers and members of that

Digitized by Google

Board for the last twenty-five years, we are not influenced by any dissatisfaction with their modes of action, or any want of fidelity on their part to the terms of this connection.

"4. *Resolved*, That we take pleasure in expressing to the A. B. C. F. M. our grateful sense of the benefits derived from their experience, foresight, and enlarged views, and of the uniform Christian kindness and courtesy which have marked their intercourse with our Board.

"5. *Resolved*, That the Board of Foreign Missions, now composed of fifteen members, be increased to twenty-four, the additional members to be chosen by the Board itself; that they be and hereby are empowered to arrange with the A. B. C. F. M. the terms of an amicable separation, and to assume the management and control of the Missions in Arcot and Amoy; and that they be authorized and directed to employ all suitable means, such as the use of the press, the appointment of agents, the holding of missionary conventions, and the like, for the purpose of developing the power and exciting the interest of our Churches in the great work of evangelizing the world.

"6. *Resolved*, That every pastor be requested to preach, at least once in each year, on the subject of sending the Gospel to the heathen, dwelling particularly upon the character of the Church as the great missionary organization, upon the claims of our missions abroad for reinforcement, and upon the duty and privilege of a more unreserved consecration of life and means to the advancement of God's cause throughout the world."

In the action of the General Synod, as thus expressed, the American Board, at its annual meeting, held at Providence, Rhode Island, in September, 1857, unanimously concurred. On Wednesday morning, September 9th, being the second day of the meeting, a special report of the prudential committee on the connection be-

Digitized by Google

tween the Reformed Dutch Church and the Board was read by the senior Secretary, the Rev. Rufus Anderson, D.D., assisted by one of the other Secretaries. After referring to the action of the General Synod, and reciting the five first of the resolutions quoted above, the report goes on to say:

"It will be proper for the prudential committee, in communicating these resolutions to the Board, to make a concise statement of the case.

"At the meeting of the Board held in New York City, in the year 1832, a committee attended from the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, whose names do not appear on our records; and Drs. Miller and Edwards, Judge Platt, and Messrs. Lewis and Anderson, (the last named now the only survivor), were appointed, a committee to confer with them. This committee of conference subsequently made the following report; viz:

"'The selection of missionaries, and the particular direction of missions, are, by the laws and regulations of the Board, made the specific duty of the prudential committee. That committee has made it an invariable rule hitherto, to give appointments as missionaries to all suitable preachers of the Gospel belonging to the Reformed Dutch, the Presbyterian, the Associate Reformed, and the Congregational Churches, who have expressed to them a willingness to devote their lives to missionary labors among the heathen. Acting on this rule, every reasonable facility will be furnished to ministers and candidates in these several denominations, for becoming missionaries in heathen lands. The joint committee see no way in which it is possible for the Synod to render it easier for the missionary candidates in their Church to avail themselves of the experience and patronage of the Board of Missions. The joint committee would recommend, as the most convenient and effectual method of securing the object which the Synod has in view, that the friends of missions in the

Digitized by Google

Reformed Dutch Church, whether acting as individuals, or in voluntary or ecclesiastical associations, exercise, if they please, their right of appropriating their contributions to the support of missionaries from their own Church, and such others as they approve. In this way they make their election of missionaries as really as if they nominated them in the first instance, and the prudential committee move onward without embarrassment.

"'The joint committee are informed, that the prudential committee intend inviting Mr. Abeel to visit this country, partly with a view to his performing an agency in the denomination to which he belongs. It is understood also, that if Mr. Abeel should, on his return, find young men in the Reformed Dutch Church possessing the requisite qualifications for missionaries, and willing to accompany him to the East, the prudential committee will gladly give them an appointment, and send them forth as missionaries of the Board. Nor will there be any objection to their forming a new and distinct mission, with an ecclesiastical organization and public worship according to their own views and wishes, as has invariably been the case with the missionaries under the superintendence of the Board. And should the friends of missions in that Church prefer appropriating their contributions to this, or any other mission or object within the proper scope of the Board, and should it be practicable to expend those contributions wisely upon that mission or object, there can be no objection to such appropriations, and the wishes of the donors will be sacredly regarded. Should there be any excess in the receipts from the Reformed Dutch Church, above the proper expenses of the missionaries from that Church, the balance will of course go for the general objects of the Board. Should it at any time be expedient to increase the number of missionaries in the missions commenced by missionaries from the Reformed Dutch Church, and should suitable men in this Church offer their services, and prefer going to those missions, they would have the preference of others.

Digitized by Google

"' These views, if sanctioned by the Board, place it within the power of the friends of missions in the Reformed Dutch Church to employ the Board, and its committee, as their almoners and agents in conducting missions among the heathen, and, at the same time, have the satisfaction of supporting missionaries from their own Church. The ecclesiastical relations and responsibilities of missionaries are not at all affected by their coming under the direction of the Board.'

"This report of the committee of conference was unanimously adopted by the Board.

"For many previous years, up to that time, the Board had sustained precisely the same relation to the Reformed Dutch Church, as it sustained, and does still sustain, to the Congregational and Presbyterian bodies. Nine members of the Reformed Dutch Church were then, or had been, corporate members of the Board; a distinguished lay member of that Church was Vice President of the Board; and at least two of the sons of that Church had for years been numbered among its missionaries. The extent of the contributions received from that source before that time, the prudential committee have not the means of knowing.

"If the compact of 1832 be closely examined, we shall see, *that it virtually contains but a single new provision.* For in reality, it added nothing to the ecclesiastical liberty which missionaries from the Reformed Dutch Church, as well as all other missionaries of the Board, had enjoyed from the beginning; nor to the liberty which donors have always had, of appropriating their donations according to their pleasure among the objects sustained by the Board. Excepting the single provision above adverted to, every thing else was merely a declaration of facts already existing.

"The special provision then made was for the forming of a distinct mission, or of distinct missions, should members of that Church be so inclined, 'with an ecclesiastical organization and public wor-

Digitized by Google

ship according to their own views and wishes.' It was also provided, in the language of the report, that 'should the friends of missions in that Church prefer appropriating their contributions to this or any other mission or object within the proper scope of the Board, and should it be practicable to expend those contributions wisely upon that mission or object, there can be no objection to such appropriations, and the wishes of the donors will be sacredly regarded. Should there be any excess in the receipts from the Reformed Dutch Church, above the proper expenses of the missionaries from that Church, the balance will of course go for the general objects of the Board. Should it at any time be expedient to increase the number of missionaries in the missions commenced by missionaries from the Reformed Dutch Church, and should suitable men in this Church offer their services, and prefer going to those missions, they would have the preference of others.'

"'These views,' it was added in the report then adopted, 'if sanctioned by the Board, place it within the power of the friends of missions in the Reformed Dutch Church to employ the Board, and its committee, as their almoners and agents in conducting missions among the heathen; and, at the same time, have the satisfaction of supporting missionaries from their own Church.'

"A mission composed of four brethren from the Reformed Dutch Church was sent to Netherlands-India, in the year 1836: and five other brethren from the same Church joined the mission subsequently, at different times. The government of Netherlands-India, adopted a narrow policy towards this mission, shut it up in Borneo, and greatly embarrassed its operations. It was discontinued in 1849, for want of missionaries to take the place of those who were removed from the field by death and sickness.

"The Amoy mission took its present distinctive form in the year 1844, when Messrs. Doty and Pohlman, under instructions from the prudential committee, went thither from Borneo. Mr. Abeel was

Digitized by Google

already there, but was soon obliged, by failing health, to return to the United States; and Mr. Pohlman perished by shipwreck in 1849. Mr. Talmage arrived in 1847, and Mr. Joralmon in 1856. Within the few years past, the brethren at Amoy have had more cheering success than has been experienced elsewhere in China. However important the prudential committee may have deemed a reïnforcement of this mission between the years 1849 and 1856, they thought it expedient to retain the ground for the brethren of the Reformed Dutch Church; and tidings during the past year, from the college and seminary at New Brunswick, have cheered them with the expectation, that this most interesting field will soon be more adequately occupied.

"The Arcot mission originated, in its present form, in the year 1854, through the action of the prudential committee, with missionaries belonging to the Reformed Dutch Church. It began with two sons of the late Dr. John Scudder, and now has five.

"The only question of business, as it appears to the prudential committee, which the resolutions of the General Synod bring before the Board, relates to the report adopted in the year 1832, and to the two missions which have grown out of it. The relations of the Board to the Reformed Dutch Church, which existed previously, through the membership of honored fathers and brethren of that Church, and which has been the source of so much pleasure and advantage to the Board, is not supposed to be matter for action, on the part either of the Synod or of the Board.

"The Board will doubtless assent to dissolving the particular compact of 1832, in the same fraternal spirit with which it has been proposed by their brethren of the General Synod.

"It will be obvious to the Board, however, that the dissolution of that compact can have no effect to dissolve the relation of any one of the missionaries, as such, to the Board. Their offers of service in connection with the Board, came from them as individuals,

Digitized by Google

in the exercise of their individual and personal responsibilities; and the missionaries from the Reformed Dutch Church sustain precisely the same relation to the Board with all its other missionaries. The committee know of no reason for supposing, that any one in the Amoy mission, or Arcot mission, will not be ready to ask for a release from his connection with the Board, on learning the action of the General Synod, and the concurrence of the Board in the same; and the prudential committee will feel it to be their duty to give their cheerful assent to such applications. But the relation which the missionaries sustain to the Board, under the circumstances, can be dissolved only on application from the missionaries themselves; and the rules and regulations of the Board devolve the act of dissolution on the prudential committee. To dismiss our brethren in any other manner, would be in disregard of the nature of the compact existing between them and the Board.

"Nothing is said in the compact of 1832 as to the transfer of missions, as such, in case the Reformed Dutch Church should at any time desire to recede from the engagements of this compact. But there has always been a tacit understanding among the executive officers of the Board, that those particular missions, which should be formed and continued on the peculiar basis of this compact, would be transferred, with the property thereto belonging, when the compact should be dissolved; and the prudential committee advise that this be done.

"The documents received from these missions up to the time of transfer, and from the Borneo mission, ought to remain with the Board. They form a part of its history; are needed to illustrate and justify its proceedings; and, so far as they embody its experience, they go to form its stock in trade. But the Board of Foreign Missions in the Reformed Dutch Church should have the privilege of taking copies of such documents as it may desire.

"The expenses properly chargeable to the Reformed Dutch

Digitized by Google

Church, since the year 1832, are believed by the prudential committee not to vary much from the amount received as donations from that body.

"The prudential committee are happy in expressing their grateful sense of the kindness, candor and Christian urbanity, on the part of that Church and its Board of Foreign Missions, which have uniformly characterized their intercourse. And it is well known to the Board, that none of its Corporate Members have taken a more lively and intelligent interest in it proceedings and prosperity, than have those from the Reformed Dutch Church; one of whom, respected and beloved by all, has long presided, with distinguished ability, in its annual meetings.

"*Missionary House, Boston, Sept.* 1, 1857."

After the reading of the foregoing report, Rev. Dr. Ferris made some remarks, expressing the fraternal sympathy, and giving assurance of the continued and most cordial fellowship of the Reformed Dutch Church with the Board, in the great work of missions. The report was then referred to a special committee, consisting of Dr. Hopkins, Dr. Hawes, Dr. Anderson, Dr. Ferris, R. D. Muzzy, M. D., Rev. C. Blodgett, and Rev. Wm. Hogarth, who subsequently presented the following report, which, with the resolutions, was accepted and adopted.

"The committee appointed to consider the connection between this Board and the Reformed Dutch Church, accord with the opinion expressed in the document which has been placed in their hands, that the only thing calling for the action of this Board is the compact with the Reformed Dutch Church made in the year 1832. That compact the Board are invited, in the most fraternal and Christian manner, by the General Synod, now to dissolve; it being the opinion of the Synod, that such a measure, at this time, will be promotive of Christ's kingdom. The committee join with the prudential committee in recommending, that the Board meet this proposal

Digitized by Google

in the spirit with which it is made by their respected brethren of the Reformed Dutch Church, and that the following resolutions be adopted:

"*Resolved*, 1st, That, in accordance with the proposal received from the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, the Board assents to a dissolution of the compact, for the prosecution of Foreign Missions, which was formed with that Synod in the year 1832.

"*Resolved*, 2dly, That the appointment of a missionary being a personal matter, involving a mutual contract and obligation between the missionary and the Board, therefore, should the missionaries of the Amoy and Arcot missions, formed and prosecuted on the basis of this compact, request a release from their connection with the Board, the prudential committee is instructed to grant such a release; and also to transfer the property in those missions to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Dutch Church.

"*Resolved*, 3dly, That all financial questions, growing out of this business, be referred for mutual adjustment to the prudential committee and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Dutch Church.

"*Resolved*, 4thly, That in assenting to a dissolution of this compact, now of twenty-five years' duration, the Board gratefully acknowledges the expressions of respect, esteem and confidence, which are embodied in the resolutions of the General Synod; and it would also bear testimony to the Christian kindness and urbanity, which have uniformly and eminently characterized the pastors and members of that Church, and especially the officers of its Board of Foreign Missions, in their intercourse with the officers and agents of this Board, and would give assurance of our earnest hope and prayer, that the results of the step now taken may equal the highest expectations of the Reformed Dutch Church, in the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX C.

SERMON BY REV. GABRIEL LUDLOW, D.D.,

PREACHED IN THE

REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH OF HARLINGEN,

ON

ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1858,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

REV. PETER LABAGH, D.D.

OTHER MEN LABORED, AND YE ARE ENTERED INTO THEIR LABORS.
JOHN 4:38.

THESE words were addressed by our Lord to his disciples on an interesting occasion. I need not, before such an audience, dwell on the occasion, or go into an extended exposition of the words themselves, or of the words which compose the context. It is quite sufficient to remark, that by the labors of other men, Jesus Christ intended the labors of those who had preceded them in dispensing religious instruction, and that by their entrance into the labors of these men he meant to convey the idea, that they had reaped, and would continue to reap advantage from these labors in their subsequent course; nay, that these previous labors would serve as vantage ground, of which they might and would avail themselves in carrying forward the great and glorious cause in which they were engaged.

The fact stated in the text, as to these disciples, brings up to view a law applicable to the race of which we form a part, in obedience to which we move along. Men, and the successive gene-

Digitized by Google

rations of men, are dependent upon each other for success in their various enterprises. This law is beautifully and strikingly illustrated and confirmed in the affairs of our world. One man, or even one whole generation, can accomplish little of itself. Life is too short, and the human faculties too feeble and limited in their scope. What one man or one generation commences, is but a rude, imperfect sketch, that must be extended, improved and completed, as well as enjoyed, by those that come after.

Parents labor for their children, and children enter into the labors of their parents. They enjoy them not only, but if they are such as they should be, they extend them, taking up the matter where their parents were compelled to leave it. The hardy pioneer levels the forest, extends his clearings, erects his log cabin, cultivates as well as he can the patches of earth laid open to the rays of the sun, and then passes away. He has done his work. His successor commences where he ceased, and after a time you see the large, well cultivated and well inclosed farm, and the stately mansion. After the exertions of a generation or two of such men, you see the smiling village, and town, and city, crowded with busy inhabitants.

One man turns his attention, perhaps by mere accident, to the application of the expansive properties of steam to useful purposes, and after many fruitless and discouraging experiments, leaves it to another, or others, who gradually succeed, and accomplish that which he sighed and toiled after in vain. The discovery is applied to manufactures, and then, by some other inventive genius, to navigation. The first attempts are imperfect, awkward and unsatisfactory, but at length the majestic steamer is seen to plough her way against and through the rapid current of the noble river, with speed continually increased by successive improvements. At length the daring idea is entertained of crossing the ocean itself by the power of steam, and it is realized. Then the matter is taken up again, and

Digitized by Google

lo! the land is soon covered with railways, bearing upon them locomotives with their appended trains of cars, moving along with almost lightning swiftness.

One other reflecting mind surmises that the electric fluid and the lightning of heaven are essentially the same. The surmise, after many experiments, is found to be fact, and dwellings on the land and ships on the bosom of the ocean are protected by the insulated conductor. Then the matter is taken up again by some other inventive genius, other applications are made of the discovery, and still other kindred ones, till at length intelligence is swiftly and surely communicated by the mysterious electro-magnetic telegraph from one distant place to another, and from continent to continent through the depths of the ocean itself, and the President of this great Republic exchanges hearty congratulations in this novel and wondrous mode with the Sovereign of the British Isles. These are only a few obvious illustrations of the law suggested by, and contained in, the text.

The same law is illustrated and confirmed in the history of the Church of God. The patriarchal Church, with her distinguished men, labored, and the Church, under the Mosaic dispensation, entered into her labors. The Church, under the Mosaic dispensation, with her prophets and holy men, labored, and the New Testament Church entered into her labors. The Church, in her millenial glory, will not disdain to use the fruits of the labors of the Church in our day, and will but be the full development of the one blood-bought Church; the Church brought to the highest perfection of which she is capable, in this sin-stricken and benighted world. And what will the Church triumphant in heaven be but the finish of the whole magnificent scheme, bringing the very largest measure of glory to our God and to his Christ. In looking back through the past I see constant labor, and the entrance into that labor by others; some sowing and others reaping, and these again sowing for the

Digitized by Google

benefit of those who are to follow, each taking up the scheme where it has been left by the others, and bearing it along, and along, and along, to its fullest consummation.

I see the son of Zechariah, and those of his day—nay, the blessed Master himself, entering into the labors of the patriarchs and seers who had preceded them. I see the disciples and apostles of our Lord, under the influence of the Spirit's holy unction, entering into the labors of their predecessors, and carrying them on till an impression deep and ineffaceable was made upon every part of the gigantic Roman Empire. I see the mighty reformers, Luther, Zuingle, Melancthon, Calvin, Knox and others their associates, entering into the labors of the apostles, and primitive teachers, and disciples, and snatching with an holy violence the scriptural theology—the apostolic form of sound words once delivered to the saints from the mass of miserable rubbish in which it had been imbedded so long, almost to suffocation unto death, and holding it up with fearless hearts and vigorous arms to the view of their deluded cotemporaries. I see the Puritans and evangelical ministers and members of the Church of England, and that of Scotland; the Huguenots of France and the sufferers of Holland entering into the labors of the Reformers, and daring imprisonment, and poverty, and exile, and the block, and the stake, and carrying onward and upward the glorious cause. I see (transferring the scene of operations to our own beloved land) President Edwards, of feeble, pale, attenuated frame, but of colossal intellect; the Tennents, and our own Frelinghuysens, of blessed memory, having from time to time associated with them the eloquent and devoted Whitefield, with his soul of fire, entering on the labors of those preceding them, and exerting an influence for good, especially upon this region of country, that has been perpetuated to this very day. To narrow the view still further, and confining it to our own beloved Church, I see a Hardenbergh, a Meier, a Romeyn; a Froeligh, with a cloud resting indeed

Digitized by Google

upon the latter period of his ministry, yet not to be omitted in this list of worthies, because of the immense influence for good exerted by a number of ministers of our Church (the deceased being one of them) who were under his training; and last, though not least, John H. Livingston, "clarum et venerabile nomen." These men entered heartily and efficiently into the labors of the previous distinguished band of worthies, and carried on the work still further.

But I have my eye upon a class still nearer to our own times, and laborers in this very region of country, of which our departed father was the last surviving member; a class whose memory is still fresh and fragrant among our people. Many of you will have anticipated me when I mention the names of Condict, Smith, Hardenbergh, Vredenbergh, Zabriskie, Cannon and Labagh. Who can estimate the amount of good produced by the labors of these godly men through their preaching, example, intercourse with their people, and their steady and persevering efforts to maintain scriptural truth, order and discipline among the Churches under their pastoral care. Truly those who have succeeded them in their respective spheres of labor ought to be grateful, for they must have felt often that their way has been greatly smoothed and facilitated by those who went before them. The preacher, at least, knows and feels his obligations, and is ready frankly to acknowledge the debt he owes them; and he is not alone in this feeling. The question is not whether these men might not have done more, and done it better. They were doubtless imperfect men, and would have been among the first to acknowledge it and to avow their short-comings. But did they not accomplish much—very much? Let the state of this part of the Church, as they in succession left it, be compared with the state of other parts, and let credit, under God, be given where it is due.

But there is still a view to be taken which brings the deceased into a closer connection with a few of us here present, and is a more

Digitized by Google

affecting and impressive illustration and enforcement of the text. He was the immediate predecessor of the present pastor of the Harlingen Church. This brother has directly entered into the labors of this venerable man, and has seen results in the written record, and in the state of the people of his charge, of his past labors. Some of those, whose intercourse with the deceased was intimate, are still among the living: and some of those, too, who were associated with him in the government of the Church. Many who were indoctrinated by him in their youth, in his catechetical and Bible classes, have grown up to maturity. To what he has seen this brother is ready to bear testimony. He is not the man to conceal or to disparage the measure of usefulness to which his predecessor was enabled, through the divine blessing, to attain. That measure was not small.

The little but active, spirited and liberal Churches of Blawenburgh, Griggstown and Rocky Hill are, for the most part, shoots from the parent stock of the Church of Harlingen. The members of these Churches, for the most part, or their predecessors or parents, have been under the pastoral care of the deceased. He had much to do in their organization, and felt a deep interest in their prosperity to the end of his life. The pastors of these Churches have entered more or less directly into his labors, and must have witnessed the results of them, and must have been benefited by them greatly.

As to myself, he was one of my predecessors, for he was for a number of years associated with the estimable and revered William Richmond Smith as pastor of the Church now under my care. My testimony, so far as it is worth any thing, is explicit and full, and most cordially and cheerfully given. I can distinctly perceive traces and results of the faithful labors of these excellent men among my people to this day.

A few facts relating to the deceased, in the form of a brief biographical sketch, will no doubt be acceptable, and may be useful.

Digitized by Google

The Rev. Dr. Peter Labagh was born of religious parents, in the city of New York, on the 10th of November, 1773. In the early part of the war of the Revolution, when the British army took possession of New York, his parents, being strongly attached to the cause of the colonists, removed to Hackensack, in this State. His father was of German descent. His mother was a descendent of the French Huguenots, highly intelligent and devotedly pious. Her family name was Ozee. He was accustomed to speak of her with marked interest and affection. She must have been truly a mother in Israel. He dated his religious exercises as far back as memory extended. To use his own language: "They were not like those of the Philippian jailor, but more like those of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, so that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul." All this he traced, as many other good men have done, to the early faithful religious instructions and the Christian example of his sainted mother, as the means in the hands of God. He was unable to designate the precise time of his conversion, but he was added to the communion of the Church soon after he entered upon his theological course. He thought he could see plainly a special Providence ordering his whole course, especially from the commencement of his education in the higher branches of study. His excellent mother before him had been always a particular observer of the movements of the wonder-working providence of God.

He commenced his classical education in the Academy at Hackensack at about fifteen years of age, and continued there for about three years. Then he became connected with Erasmus Hall, in Flatbush, L. I., at that time under the care of that ripe and distinguished scholar, Peter Wilson, LL.D. Here he continued two years, acting in the two-fold capacity of tutor and pupil. The course of instruction, though academical, seems, from the account he gave, to have been quite full and comprehensive, embracing the

Digitized by Google

Latin and Greek classics; Mathematics, in its different branches; Belles-lettre, Logic, and Natural Philosophy; the text-book in this latter branch being Enfield. Taking into view the character of the principal, Dr. Wilson, we have reason to believe that the mode of instruction was careful and thorough, as well as full and comprehensive. This will account for the correctness and precision, and, I may add, finish, which he could impart to his train of thought and style, whether written or spoken, studied or unpremeditated, when he felt disposed to exert himself.

After leaving the Academy, he commenced the study of theology, under the Rev. Dr. Solomon Froeligh, at Schraalenburgh, in our State, then one of the Professors appointed by the Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church to train up her young men for the ministry. Here he continued for two years, and then finished his course by pursuing his studies for two months longer under the care of the Rev. Professor John H. Livingston, at Bedford, on Long Island. In July, 1796, at the age of somewhere about twenty-three, he was licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the Classis of Hackensack, and on the same month was ordained a minister by a committee of the same Classis, having received a call, through the Particular Synod, from a Dutch settlement at Salt River, in the state of Kentucky. He had before this engaged to visit that people and country, as a missionary. Previously, however, to his commencing his long journey (long in those days, when there were no facilities for traveling such as we possess), he was, unexpectedly, invited to engage in a mission to western New York, to the new scattered settlements of Dutch people in that region. In this enterprise he was connected with the late Rev. Dr. Sickles. Their mission was limited to six weeks, during which time they visited the settlements and organized two Churches, one at Owasco and another at Chenango. In October he returned to Hackensack.

In November following he bade farewell to parents and friends,

Digitized by Google

and commenced his journey to Kentucky, but did not reach the place of his destination until February, 1797, owing to several impediments on the way. He described his reception by the people as having been most cordial and affectionate. He remained with them ten weeks, organized a Church and visited all the families. He set out for home and arrived the last of May, and made his report to the Synod. His intention was to return to the Church he had organized, but some prudential considerations induced him to change his purpose.

He settled at Catskill in May, 1798, and continued to serve that Church, in connection with the Church at Oak Hill, for eleven years. In 1809 he accepted a call from the united congregations of Harlingen and New Shannick, as a colleague of the Rev. William R. Smith. Mr. Smith deceased in February, 1820. In 1821 the collegiate connection between the Churches of Harlingen and New Shannick was dissolved, and Dr. Labagh became the pastor of the Harlingen Church alone. Scarcely was there a communion season on which a larger or smaller number were not added to the Church during his ministry in Harlingen, but in the years 1830 and 1831, that Church was favored with a precious and extensive revival of religion, during which more than 100 members were added to its communion. The results of that interesting work are yet clearly visible. So far as the preacher has been able to ascertain from the records, at least 400 members must have been added by profession alone, during the pastorate of the deceased. In 1844 he resigned his call, with the consent of the Classis, and preached his farewell sermon on the 10th of November, on which day he entered upon his 72nd year. His resignation was not owing to any decay of his faculties, but to a failure of voice, which rendered much of what he said inaudible to his congregation. In 1846 the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him, by the trustees of Marshall College, Mercersburg, Pa.

Digitized by Google

Dr. Labagh was twice married; first to Magdalen Van Alen, of Blooming Grove, near Albany, May, 1798. The union was not a protracted one, for she died August, 1805. In October, 1808, he was married to Maria Schoonmaker, who survives to mourn his departure, after a happy union of more than half a century.

After resigning his charge, he continued, when opportunity was afforded, to preach the truth he loved, and to promote, as he could, the cause of the Master he had so long served. But bodily infirmities gradually increased upon him. These did not, however, for several years, much impede the exercise of his mind. His faculties, with the exception of his memory, remained in a good degree sound, so that he was still useful, and comfortable. Within the past year, however, his mind seemed more and more to sympathize with his enfeebled body. A strange confusion of thought, the stranger, because of its previous singular clearness; a blending of the past with the present, seemed to indicate that his course would either soon be ended, or that he would sink into a state of utter dotage. But from this last condition, one that would have been so trying, he was mercifully exempted. After the attack of disease which befel him on the evening of the 15th of October, while engaged in conducting the worship of the family, he was, for the most part, insensible to every thing around him, scarcely recognizing his nearest relatives, and most intimate friends. He gradually sank lower and still lower, till on Monday, the 25th, at 9 A. M., his spirit was released, and took its flight for glory. He was the last of the family circle to which he more immediately belonged. His remains lie before us, to be committed to the tomb, but Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life, will watch over them, with a faithfulness all his own, for they are in covenant, as well as the spirit that once animated them, and we look forward with the fullest confidence, to the time when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality.

Digitized by Google

Something, in the way of a delineation of the character of this venerable and estimable servant of Jesus Christ, may not be out of place. What is attempted will not be unmixed, indiscriminate eulogy, but as exact a portrait as possible, including shades, as well as lights. He can well afford to be dealt with after this manner. The preacher claims to be better acquainted with the deceased, than perhaps any one, outside of his immediate circle of relations, because of very frequent, intimate intercourse with him, for more than thirty-seven years, in great diversity of circumstances.

Dr. Labagh was endowed with a mind naturally of a high order. His apprehension and perceptions were remarkably quick, his judgment sound, his memory not only capacious, and retentive, but unusually ready (I speak of him of course as he was in his prime), and his taste correct, nay delicate, though his appearance might not seem to indicate it. His faculties too, were well balanced, and there was a large vein, of what is generally called common sense, running through his whole mental structure. He had great powers of invention, selection, combination and expression. He never seemed at a loss about any thing, that was at all within his sphere, and that was called for by the occasion. Few excelled him consequently in unpremeditated speech, in retort and repartee. In these latter, he was quick as the lightning's flash, and very few, indeed, could compete with him. But the superiority of his native powers was his snare. He easily gained, digested, and worked up for use, the knowledge that was immediately needed, and he looked no further. He was too easily satisfied. He could not be called a diligent, close, methodical, persevering student, and hence he stood below many men, of his day, whose native powers would not for a moment, bear a comparison with his. He had, however, made himself master of some standard works, more immediately connected with his profession, and he belonged to a class of men, who are keen observers of men and things, and of the workings of their

Digitized by Google

own minds, who make the most of every thing they see, and hear, and read, and whose thoughts are always on the stretch, wherever they may chance to be. Hence he knew much that was valuable, and knew also how to use what he had gained, to the best advantage. But those who knew him well, and of what he was capable, always regretted, and I have no doubt he often regretted himself that he had not cultivated, and disciplined, and stored his mind, to a greater extent.

As a preacher, he was always scriptural, pertinent, direct, judicious and edifying. His discourses had much of the practical and experimental elements in them. He had no corruscations; no fancy sketches; nothing to thrill, to produce smiles, or draw forth tears; nothing to attract the attention of the careless—the butterflies of the day. He knew, however, how to appreciate these powers in others, when discreetly used. He was the preacher for those who came to him for the purpose of being profited, and such never went away disappointed. The lambs and sheep, especially, were always fed, and that, too, with food the most suitable and nourishing. His discourses would undoubtedly have been of a much higher order, had he labored them more with the aid of the pen. Here his facility in thinking, and expressing himself, were again a snare, and prevented that high order of sermonizing, to which he might easily have attained. I am satisfied of this, from some specimens, which I have heard, and read, of his more elaborate compositions. During the earlier part of his ministry he wrote out his discourses, except the applications; but afterwards, he preached from a tolerably full and extended sketch; and he sometimes ventured into the pulpit, perhaps too often, with an outline, formed in his mind, on a text, which had suggested itself only a short time before it was necessary to use it. This would have been utterly ruinous to most men; but he could bear it, for his powers of improvisation never failed him; yet there was no rambling, no repe-

Digitized by Google

titions, no twaddle, even in his extemporaneous effusions, but well selected, well arranged, condensed, compact thought, expressed in language that would have read well, had it been taken down from his lips by a stenographer, and committed to the press, with little or no alteration. His voice had no music; but was rather harsh and grating to the ear, especially when he became earnest. His action was far from graceful, and his general appearance by no means prepossessing, (and he was altogether careless about it), yet there was a naturalness, an honesty, an emphasis, a downright earnestness about him, when he dispensed God's truth, that, if you had any power of attention or appreciation about you, any thing that could be taken hold of in you, compelled you to give him a hearing, impressed you, and drew forth your confidence. You instinctively said to yourself, as you looked at, and listened to him, "There is a man of God that understands his subject, feels it deeply, and is anxious that I should understand and feel it too." But he was, perhaps, peculiarly interesting, and most in his element, when with his Bible class before him, composed mainly of the youth of his charge, whom he loved to indoctrinate, he dwelt upon an extended portion of the Word, taken from the sacred history, and directed their attention to its practical bearings and applications. How many there are in that congregation to which he once ministered, that can bear testimony to the truth of all this.

He was very much at home on the floor of a deliberative ecclesiastical assembly, and with such assemblies he delighted to mingle. When the debate grew warm, and there was an increasing difference of opinion, he was not the man to stand aloof, or to remain silent; and he was always listened to with respect and confidence, by his brethren, for he always threw out what was calculated to solve difficulties and disentangle complications. The structure of his mind and his habits well fitted him for playing a distinguished part on such an arena. There must be a peculiar activity and

Digitized by Google

sprightliness of mind, a fertility of expedient, a copiousness of resources, a good degree of self-possession and fluency of speech in any one who would excel in such a position, and he had all these in a measure larger than most men. He was always on the spot, and he made himself to be felt, when he was there. We of the Classis of Philadelphia always looked toward him, instinctively, when any matter was under consideration that was new, or perplexing, and when he happened to be absent, which was rarely the case, till his infirmities grew upon him, we hardly felt competent or prepared to go on—we hardly felt that we were a duly appointed ecclesiastical body. He was so punctual in attendance, that we calculated upon seeing him, as a matter of course. The preacher recollects, that at the last spring meeting, though encompassed and bowed down with fast gathering infirmities, he appeared among us, in spite of a storm, which many a young, strong, healthy man, might have regarded as a very sufficient reason for absence.

He loved the Church of Jesus Christ, in all its divisions, and, while he was a pastor, was importunate with his people, heedless of their displeasure, in pressing upon them the various objects, necessary to be fostered, by their contributions and their prayers, always setting them an example of liberality. This liberality he continued to practice to the last, and to the last, manifested a deep interest, in whatever was calculated to advance the cause of the Divine Redeemer, at home and abroad.

But he loved that portion of the Church, to which he more immediately belonged, with an intensity felt by few. He was a faithful son of the Reformed Dutch Church; one eminently so. I know not that any one will dare to charge him with sectarianism, bigotry, or uncharitableness, for he manifested and expressed, as well as felt, an affection for all who held the essential doctrines of the religion of Christ; but the denominational spirit was very strong in

Digitized by Google

him. He did much, along with many of her sons, of kindred spirit, who have preceded him, at longer or shorter intervals, in their passage to the world of glory, to advance her interests; and now I can imagine a renewal of their sweet fellowship—a fellowship far sweeter than the Church on earth knows of, for it is the fellowship of the spirits of just men made perfect. He was eager for the extension of the Church of his affections, and jealous for her rights; surveying, moreover, with eagle eyes, any spot, within her bounds or near them, that might be seized by the members of some other communion, and urging its immediate appropriation by ourselves. Some of us thought, sometimes, that he carried this matter a little too far, and were sometimes a little chafed, but his intentions were unquestionably good, his motives pure; and in most cases, though not in all, the result has justified his views and measures.

Dr. Labagh was strongly conservative in his views and tendencies. He held on to old landmarks of doctrine, and measures, and order, with a hearty, old fashioned grasp. He was not given to change. He might be said, with truth, to abhor innovations; but he made a difference between innovations and improvements. If you suggested any thing new, that was likely to be useful, and that did not conflict with scriptural teaching, he was ready to consider it at once, and to deal with it according to its merits. I have heard him say, in that frank and liberal spirit, which, to the end, was a most beautiful feature in his character, "Convince me, brethren, that this is right and beneficial, and I will go into it along with you with all my heart;" and he was really, and not in mere pretence, open to conviction. I have often had occasion to remark, how little of the spirit of the old man, and how much of that of the young man he carried with him even into extreme old age.

He was pleasant in his family circle. I need not say what he was as a husband, a father, a brother. There was a cheerfulness, a kindness, a faithfulness, a considerateness, a playfulness, that must

Digitized by Google

have endeared, and I know did endear him, to them all. Though he was far advanced in life, and knowing as they did that the separation could not long be deferred, when the blow actually fell at last, they were not quite ready for it, and would fain have retained him yet a little longer among them. "How mercies brighten as they take their flight." How little we appreciate the good we possess, till it is removed, or is about to be removed from us. But he has "come to his end, as a shock of corn fully ripe, cometh in in its season." His work has been done long since, and he had drained the cup of life to its dregs. It was better, infinitely better, for him to depart, and to be with Christ. His condition prevented him from uttering an intelligent, distinct and full testimony, as to the value of the truth, and the preciousness and faithfulness of the Saviour, on a sick bed and at the portals of eternity. This would no doubt have been pleasant and edifying. But God, the good, the wise, ordered it otherwise, and we ought to be, and are, satisfied with the testimony he uttered through many a year, even till he was stricken with disease, while bowing the knee before his God in prayer. The voice of prayer, as to him, has been changed into that of ceaseless, fervent praise, before the throne of God and the Lamb.

Our departed father was a man of an exceedingly social disposition. He had nothing of the recluse about him. He loved to mingle with his fellows, and there was a pleasantness about him, a flow of spirits, a fund of anecdote, a turn for harmless raillery and humor which rendered his intercourse agreeable to all ages. He prized the society of his people, when he had a charge, and was much with them. He prized too, very much, the society of his brethren in the ministry. He had indeed, an abruptness about him, a power of satire and sarcasm, which sometimes rendered him a little formidable to sensitive natures. There have been cases, no doubt, in which his abruptness, and his sarcastic and satirical strokes have occasioned

Digitized by Google

pain. But he certainly had no evil intention in what he said. It arose not from bitterness of feeling, but was only the natural and easy exercise of, or a giving way to, the tendencies which belonged to the man, without, perhaps, his being aware of what he was saying, or of the effects it was likely to produce. In order to know him, it was necessary to come near him; and he belonged to a class of men, who are valued in proportion as they are better known. I will not hesitate to say from long and intimate acquaintance with him, that in reality a more kind, genial, affectionate, sympathizing spirit, rarely animated a human frame. And how easy it was for him to turn the conversation into a religious channel. There was, when he did this of his own accord, or was drawn by others to do it, no effort, nothing forced, when he spoke of the things which pertain to the kingdom of God. These things were matters which evidently lay near his heart, and subjects of his frequent meditation, especially toward the close of his life.

The Church has lost one of her best men; and she would feel it more, had she lost him suddenly. But he has been cut off, in a good degree, for some years, from the scenes where he at a previous period of his life was often seen and busied. We have been compelled to forego his counsels and aid, and have learned through necessity, to some extent, to do without him. This we find to be necessary often in this world of change and death, but it is far from being easy.

The Church will not forget the past usefulness of our departed father, but will cherish his memory. And we, my brethren in the ministry, will think of him as another laborer, fallen, after having labored for years, that we might enter into his labors; that we might enjoy them and improve upon them. We will think of him as still another light, which after flickering for a while, and growing dimmer and dimmer, has at length gone out entirely, to be rekindled in another higher sphere, to burn on, with a radiance

Digitized by Google

that will not be extinguished, or even dimmed, for ever. We have seen light after light put out from time to time, burning and shining lights—put out one after another, in alas! too quick succession, for our comfort. God would admonish us who are yet left here for a time, that we may ray out a little more light, into the dense surrounding darkness; He would, I say, admonish us to trim our lights thoroughly, and to remove every thing that can tend to intercept one solitary ray; He would admonish us so to let our light shine, that we, to some extent, may answer the great end for which we have been fixed in our different positions.

How glorious and animating the truth, that there is one light that will not, that can not, go out—the uncreated—the unchanging light—the everlasting Sun of Righteousness, from which all inferior, subordinate lights derive their power to shine. The Church is sure of the continuance of this light unto the end, and that it will pour its rays down, and around, upon islands and continents, upon nations and people, till there will not be one solitary dark place upon the surface of the whole earth, and one prolonged shout shall be heard emulating ten thousand peals of thunder: Alleluiah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Digitized by Google

INDEX.

PAGE

Abeel, Dr. John N., urges Dr. Labagh to accept the Kentucky mission..... 29

Alexander, Dr. Archibald, extract from the "Log College" of, 103

American Board. See FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Annin, Joseph, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70

Associate Reformed Church. See CHURCH.

Bayard, John M., and Samuel, two of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 69

Beattie, Rev. John, appointed a missionary to Canada..... 51

Beekman, Capt. Samuel, referred to..... 252

Bethune, Dr. George W., letter of, in regard to Dr. Labagh.... 257

Bible Societies, origin of..... 68

Bible Society, American, organization of..... 68

Sentiments of Dr. Labagh in regard to..... 138

New Jersey, suggests the formation of the American Bible Society..... 68

Somerset County, organization of..... 67

Blair, Francis P. Sr. and Jr., referred to..... 102

Rev. John and Samuel, relatives of Rev. Wm. R. Smith, 102

Blawenburgh, Reformed Dutch Church of, organization and history of..... 167

Referred to..... 188

Digitized by Google

PAGE

Boggs, Rev. John, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70
Bonaparte, Napoleon, referred to.....127, 209
Bork, Rev. Christian, appointed a missionary to Canada..... 49
Boudinot, Hon. Elias, President of New Jersey Bible Society.. 68
Proposes organization of American Bible Society.... 68
Bradford, Dr. John M, President of General Synod of 1814... 74
Signs the proposed plan of union with Associate Reformed Church..... 96
Brevoort, Henry, referred to..... 208
Brinkerhoff, Rev. George G., assists at Dr. Labagh's ordination.....36, 38
Brodhead, Dr. Jacob, incident at the death of..... 234
Brownlee, Dr. William C., referred to..... 143

Caldwell, Rev. James and wife, murder of by British soldiers, 81
Canada, Reformed Dutch Churches in.....40, 45
Cannon, Captain, referred to..... 207
Dr. James S., referred to..... 22
Classmate of Dr. Labagh at Schraalenburgh..... 29
Delegate to Synod of German Reformed Church..... 66
Inaugurates correspondence with that body..... 67
One of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70
Commissioner to confer with Commissioners of Associate Reformed Church..... 91
Preaches at Griggstown..... 199
Anecdote in regard to..... 200
Difficulty in finding his text..... 201
Intercourse with Dr. Labagh..... 203
Failure of health of..... 204
Communication of to General Synod..... 204
Last sickness and death of..... 206

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Funeral of..... 206
Relative ages of himself and Dr. Labagh..... 207
Sketch of the life of..... 207
Referred to..... 233
Chambers, Dr. Talbot W., preaches at an ordination..... 197
Christian Intelligencer, extract from..... 133
Church, Associate Reformed, proposed union of with Reformed Dutch Church..... 87
Further proposition and effort toward the same end, 94
Failure of the plan..... 97
Communion, importance of caution in admitting to.. 175
Judicatories, importance of attending..... 177
German Reformed, enters into correspondence with the Reformed Dutch Church..... 67
Termination of the correspondence and causes of..... 67
Official documents relating to the termination, Appendix A..... 267
Presbyterian, General Assembly of, complaint of General Synod to..... 142
Amicable adjustment of difficulties with..... 143
Fraternal correspondence with General Synod..... 144
Reformed Dutch, early efforts of to extend the Gospel, 40
Results of efforts..... 44
Churches of, in Canada.....40, 45
Efforts of to supply them with ministers..... 49
Number and condition of churches of, in Canada..... 53
A Church of, organized in Kentucky..... 59
Enters into correspondence with German Reformed Church..... 67
Termination of correspondence and causes of 67
Official documents relating to the termination, Appendix A..... 267

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Proposed union of with Associate Reformed Church.. 87
Further proposition and effort toward the same end.. 94
Failure of the plan..... 97
Reörganization of Theological Seminary of..... 113
Connection of, with the American Board..... 138
Dissolution of the connection, and official documents relating thereto, Appendix B..... 279
True Reformed Dutch, account of its origin..... 128
Clark, Ebenezer, commissioner to confer with commissioners of Reformed Dutch Church..... 88
Clove, Reformed Dutch Church of the, referred to..... 73
Coens, Rev. Henricus, organizes Church of Harlingen..... 185
Colman, Dr. Benjamin, of New England, refered to..... 147
Colonization, action of General Synod in regard to..... 137
Society, New Jersey, organization of..... 136
Comfort, Rev. David, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70
Corwin, Rev. E. Tanjore, extract from "Manual" of..... 129

Davies, President Samuel, referred to..... 102
Demarest, Dr. David D., extract from "History and Characteristics," by..... 129
De Ronde, Rev. Lambertus, referred to..... 134
De Witt, Dr. John, professor of theology..... 116
Dr. Thomas, appointed on the agency to Holland.... 126
Dickey, Rev. Ebenezer, efforts of, to promote Christian union 87, 88
Doctrinal preaching, importance of..... 173
Dubois, Nicholas, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70
Dumont, Peter B., one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 69
Duryee, Rev. Philip, member of the committee on Dr. Froeligh's secession..... 130

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Edwards, Rev. Jonathan, referred to..... 147
Extract from "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," by, 147
Eliot, Rev. John, labors of, for the Indians..... 142
Elmendorf, Peter, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 69
Ely, Dr., Ezra Styles, referred to..... 142

Ferris, Dr. Isaac, invited to the pastoral charge of Harlingen Church, but declines..... 111
On the General Synod's committee on Colonization... 137
Rev. John Mason, referred to..... 225
Finley, Dr. Robert, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible, and American Colonization Societies. 69
Dr. Samuel, referred to..... 102
Foreign Missions, American Board of Commissioners for, referred to..... 138
Connection of Reformed Dutch Church with, dissolved..... 138
Official documents relating to the dissolution, Appendix B..... 279
Forsyth, Dr. John, extract from "Life of Proudfit," by..... 25
Further extract from same..... 35
Referred to..... 124
Freeman, Rev. John Edgar, and wife, murdered at Cawnpore, India, by the Sepoys..... 81
Frelinghuysen, Hon. Theodore, inauguration of, as President of Rutgers College..... 209
Rev. Johannes, first pastor of Harlingen Church..... 185
John, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 69
Rev. Theodorus Jacobus, referred to..... 147
Characteristics of preaching of..... 147

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Referred to by President Edwards..... 147
Letter of Rev. Gilbert Tennent in regard to. 148
Freneau, Philip, the poet, referred to..... 207
Froeligh, Rev. Peter D., appointed a missionary to Canada.... 49
Dr. Solomon, is Dr. Labagh's pastor..... 26
Teaches theology..... 28, 114
Officiates at Dr. Labagh's ordination..... 36
Signs his certificate of ordination..... 38
Commissioner to confer with commissioners of Associate Reformed Church..... 91
Conspiracy of, to divide the Church..... 128
Action of General Synod in regard to it..... 130
Is suspended from the ministry..... 131
Sketch of the life of..... 133
Death of..... 135
Referred to..... 208

Gardner, Rev. John, call and settlement of, as sixth pastor of Harlingen Church..... 183
Takes part in the service at Dr. Labagh's funeral..... 215
German Reformed Church. See CHURCH.
Goetschius, Rev. John H., referred to..... 134
Gosman, Dr. John, member of the committee on the proposed union with Associate Reformed Church..... 86
Preaches the sermon at Dr. Cannon's funeral..... 206
Griggstown, Reformed Dutch Church of, causes which led to the organization of..... 178
Old established prayer meeting in the bounds of..... 179
Organization of.... 179
Referred to..... 188
Ordination and installation of second pastor of..... 197
Resolutions of Consistory of, on death of Dr. Labagh. 216

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Gunn, Dr., Alexander, appointed a missionary to Canada..... 51
Guyse, Dr. John, referred to..... 147

Hackensack, Reformed Dutch Church of, Drs. Labagh and Cannon received into communion of.....26, 208
Hageman, John F., letter of, in regard to the revival of 1831.. 155
Hardenbergh, Rev. Charles, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70
On committee to remove remains of Rev. Elias Van Bunschooten..... 76
Dr. Jacob R., president of Queens College..... 114
Elder J. R., member of committee on Dr. Froeligh's secession..... 130
Harlingen, Reformed Dutch Church of, organization and history of..... 184
Makes informal proposals to Dr. Labagh..... 59
Dissolution of connection of, with Shannock..... 111
Introduction of stoves into..... 112
Great revival in..... 145, 150
Additions to membership of, in 1810 and 1817..... 150
Letter of John F. Hageman, Esq., in regard to great revival..... 155
Ingathering of converts..... 165
Revivals in, referred to..... 187
Heyer, Cornelius, signs proposed plan of union with Associate Reformed Church..... 96
Holdich, Dr. Joseph, speaks on Colonization..... 136
Horne, Bishop George, extract from preface to memoir of..... 263
Howell, Mrs. Andrew, aids in establishing Sunday school at Somerville..... 81

Kirkpatrick, Alexander, one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70
Koelbag, Johannes, referred to..... 185

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Labagh, Rev. Isaac, induces his brother Peter to study..... 22
Referred to..... 29
Mrs. Judith, letters of..... 10
Obituary of..... 13
Remarkable impression of, in regard to death of a friend..... 16
Emotions on her son's acceptance of the Kentucky mission..... 39
Dr. Peter, parentage of..... 9
Letters to, from his mother..... 10
Death of mother of..... 12
Dr. Wilson's obituary of mother of..... 13
Record of her death in family register..... 18
Birth of..... 21
Removal of parents of to Hackensack..... 22
Begins the study of Latin..... 22
Engages in business in Brooklyn..... 22
Abandons business and enters upon a course of study. 22
Text books of, at Hackensack..... 23
Peculiarity of the school at Hackensack..... 23
Enters Erasmus Hall, Flatbush, L. I..... 24
Returns to Hackensack..... 26
Christian experience and profession of..... 26
Studies theology with Dr. Froeligh..... 28
Classmates of..... 28
Accepts Kentucky mission..... 29
Completes his studies with Dr. Livingston..... 30
Latin certificate of, by Dr. Livingston..... 30
Translation of certificate of..... 32
Opinion of, in regard to Dr. Livingston's teaching.... 35
Licensure and ordination of.....36, 208
Certificate of ordination of..... 37

Digitized by Google

PAGE

Remark to, by his mother, in regard to Kentucky mission..... 39
Goes on missionary exploring tour to western New York..... 40
Returns to New Jersey..... 44
Sets out for Kentucky..... 57
Touching incident to, on the journey..... 58
Organizes a Church in Kentucky..... 59
Returns to New Jersey..... 59
Invited to settle at Shannock..... 59
Settles at Catskill and Oakhill..... 60
Marriage of to Magdalen Van Alen..... 60
Death of wife and children of..... 60
Second marriage of to Maria Schoonmaker..... 61
Removes to Shannock and Harlingen..... 61
Inaugural discourse..... 61
Chosen a trustee of Queens college..... 66
Delegate to German Reformed Synod..... 66
Inaugurates correspondence with that body..... 67
Doubts the expediency of its termination in 1853.... 67
One of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society, 67
Obtains permission for Rev. E. Van Bunschooten to speak in Synod..... 74
On committee to remove Mr. Van Bunschooten's remains 76
Interested in organization of Sunday schools..... 78
Establishes Sunday schools at Harlingen..... 82
Influence of in General Synod..... 86
On the committee to consider the proposed plan of union with Associate Reformed Church. 86
Report of on the subject..... 96
Sermon of on death of his colleague..... 100
Farewell sermon of at Shannock..... 112

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Settles as sole pastor at Harlingen..... 112
Report of on reörganization of Theological Seminary, 116
Appointed to obtain funds for the Seminary..... 120
Report of on enlargement of Seminary library..... 125
Report of on agency to Holland..... 125
Report adopted and agents appointed..... 126
Himself one of them..... 126
Appointed to obtain funds for Seminary and College.. 128
Member of committee on Dr. Froeligh's secession.... 130
Discharges a disagreeable duty..... 132
Interest of in benevolent institutions..... 135
One of the founders of New Jersey Colonization Society..... 136
Report of to General Synod on colonization..... 137
Connection of with case of Leonard B. Van Dyke... 142
Report of to General Synod..... 142
Delegate to Presbyterian General Assembly..... 143
Labors of during great revival of 1831..... 154
New churches formed during ministry of..... 167
Organizes Blawenburgh Church..... 168
Charge of to new pastor at Blawenburgh..... 169
Contemplates resignation of his pastoral office..... 180
Resignation of offered and acted upon..... 181
Pastoral relation of dissolved by Classis..... 182
Preaches at Harlingen till installation of successor... 183
Farewell sermon of at Harlingen..... 184
Fifth pastor at Harlingen Church..... 187
Goes to reside with Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Van Derveer..... 193
Employments and diversions of..... 194
Punctuality of at church and prayer meeting....194, 195
Interest in Sunday school and Bible class..... 195

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Receives degree of Doctor of Divinity..... 195
Obtains funds for Rutgers College..... 196
Ministerial labors of..... 196
Interest in meetings of ecclesiastical and benevolent bodies..... 196
Takes part in the services at an ordination..... 197
Becomes a regular worshiper at Griggstown..... 198
Meets Dr. Cannon there..... 199
Anecdote in regard to them..... 200
Intercourse of with Dr. Cannon..... 203
Attends Dr. Cannon's funeral..... 206
Relative ages of himself and Dr. Cannon..... 207
Premonitions of his approaching end..... 210
Last sickness and death of..... 211
Dying testimony of..... 212
Funeral of..... 213
Impression made by death of.....8, 214
Removal of remains of to Rocky Hill..... 215
Resolutions of Griggstown Consistory on death of..... 216
Resolutions of Classis of Philadelphia..... 218
Resolutions of Somerset County Bible Society..... 219
Resolutions of trustees of Rutgers College..... 220
Estimate of character of..... 223
Personal appearance, health and vigor of..... 224
Intellectual symmetry of..... 226
Common sense and judgment, and fertility of invention of..... 227
Reasoning powers of..... 228
Love of polite literature and music of..... 228
Wit and humor of.....230, 253, 260
Memory of..... 233
Striking incident..... 234

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Character of as a student.....234, 259
Child-like piety of..... 236
Returning thanks after meals..... 238
Character of as a preacher.....239, 255
Testimony in regard to, by Rev. M. L. Schenck..... 241
Kindness and fidelity of as a pastor..... 241
Recollections of Rev. N. D. Williamson in regard to, 242
Care and labors of for the young..... 242
Church love and catholic sympathies of.....247, 254
Regard of for Dr. Miller..... 248
Remark made to by Dr. Miller..... 249
Letter of Dr. Van Vechten in regard to..... 250
Love of candor of..... 255
Letter of Dr. Bethune in regard to..... 257
Cheerfulness of..... 260
Lesson taught by life of..... 262
Lansing, Rev. Nicholas, assists at Dr. Labagh's ordination...36, 38
Leydt, Rev. M., referred to..... 134
Livingston, Dr. John H., pastor of Collegiate Church, New York.....30, 114
Teaches Dr. Labagh theology..... 30
Latin certificate written by..... 30
High opinion of as a professor, in other Churches.... 35
President of Queens College.....66, 115
On committee to remove remains of Rev. E. Van Bunschooten..... 76
Commissioner to confer with commissioners of Associate Reformed Church..... 91
Signs proposed plan of union..... 96
Connection of with Theological Seminary..... 114
Extract from Baccalaureate of..... 114
Resigns his pastoral charge..... 115

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Removes to New Brunswick..... 116
Referred to.....134, 208
Rev. Edward P., takes part in services at Dr. Labagh's funeral..... 214
Lubkert, Rev. Mr., translates Dutch letters of Mrs. Judith Labagh..... 10
Ludlow, Dr. Gabriel, preaches sermon at Dr. Labagh's funeral, 214
Sermon of, Appendix C..... 303
Dr. John, Professor of Theology..... 116
Apppointed on the agency to Holland..... 126
Luther, Martin, establishes Sunday schools in Germany... 78

Mandeville, Rev. Garret, classmate of Dr. Labagh..... 29
Mason, Dr. John M., proposes a closer connection of Reformed Dutch and Associate Reformed Churches..... 87
Signs proposed plan of union..... 96
Mather, Cotton, extract from "Magnalia" of..... 42
Mathews, Dr. J. M., referred to..... 142
Mc Cartee, Peter, signs proposed plan of union..... 96
Mc Dowall, Rev. Robert, missionary in Canada..... 45
Letter of, in regard to Reformed Dutch Churches in Canada..... 45
Mc Leod, Robert B. E., signs proposed plan of union..... 96
Megapolensis, Dr. Johannes, labors of, for the Indians.....41, 44
Melancthon, Philip, establishes Sunday schools in Germany... 78
Messler, Dr. Abraham, extract from paper of, on "The Hollanders in New Jersey"..... 147
Ministerial success of..... 149
"Pastor's Memorial" of, referred to..... 149
Delivers a charge at an installation..... 198
Takes part in services at Dr. Labagh's funeral..... 214
Meyer, Dr. Hermannus, teaches theology..... 72
Referred to..... 135

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Miller, Dr. Samuel, visits Dr. Labagh, and preaches for him.. 248
Striking remark of..... 249
Rev. Alexander, teaches at Hackensack.....22, 24
English Grammar by..... 22
Referred to..... 208
Milledollar, Dr. Philip, preaches at dedication of Blawenburgh Church..... 168
Missions. See Church and Foreign Missions.

New Brunswick, Reformed Dutch Church of, remains of Rev. Mr. Van Bunschooten interred in cemetery of..... 76
Review, extract from..... ... 72
New Jersey Bible Society, early organization of..... 68
Proposes formation of American Bible Society..... 68
Colonization Society, organization of..... 136
Anniversary of 136
Nourse, Joseph, commissioner to confer with commissioners of Reformed Dutch Church..... 88

Oberlin, Rev. John Frederic, labors of, to promote the cause of Sunday schools in France..... 80
Ostrander, Rev. Henry, appointed a missionary to Canada..... 50

Pastoral office, different aspects of..... 170
Qualifications for.....171, 176
Permanency in, importance of.....176
Care of children..... 174
Visiting, importance of..... 175
Peterse, Gerbrant, referred to..... 185
Polhemus, Dr. Abraham, extract from Alumni Address of..... 122
Sketch of the life of..... 123
Rev. Henry, fourth pastor of Harlingen Church..... 186
Potts, Hon. Stacy G., speaks on Colonization..... 136

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Preaching, doctrinal, importance of..... 173
Presbyterian Church. See CHURCH.
Prince, Rev. Thomas, extract from "Christian History" of.... 148
Proudfit, Dr. Alexander, extract from Life of..... 25
Further extract..... 35
Efforts to promote Christian union.....87, 88

Queens College. See RUTGERS COLLEGE.

Raikes, Robert, efforts of, in Sunday school cause..... 78
Raritan, Reformed Dutch Church of, organization of Somerset County Bible Society at..... 69
Increase of membership of..... 149
Reformed Dutch Church. See CHURCH.
Reyters, Abraham, referred to..... 185
Rockwell, Rev. J. Edson, extract from "Sketches" of..... 40
Romeyn, Dr. Theodoric, teaches theology..... 114
Referred to.....133, 135
Rouse, Rev. Peter P., collects funds for Theological Seminary.. 120
Rutgers, Henry, commissioner to confer with commissioners of Associate Reformed Church..... 91
Signs proposed plan of union..... 96
College, Dr. Labagh chosen a trustee of..... 66
Donation of Rev. Elias Van Bunschooten for benefit of 74
Suspension and revival of..... 114
Dr. Labagh obtains funds for.....128, 196

Schenck, Rev. Martin L., extract from sermon of..... 241
Rev. William C., one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70
Schermerhorn, Rev. Cornelius, contemplates removal to Canada, 55
Rev. J. F., appointed a missionary to Canada..... 52
Appointed to collect funds for the Theo'l Seminary.. 120

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Appointed on the agency to Holland..... 127
Preaches at Harlingen during the Revival of 1831.... 161
Schuneman, Dr. Johannes, referred to..... 133
Schureman, Dr. John, Professor of Theology..... 116
Seamen's Friend Society, American, sentiments of Dr. Labagh in regard to.....138, 139
Sears, President Barnas, on the origin of Sunday schools..... 78
Shannock, Reformed Dutch Church of, makes informal proposals to Dr. Labagh..... 59
Dissolution of connection of with Harlingen..... 111
Referred to..... 187
Sickles, Dr. Jacob, goes on an exploring tour to western New York..... 40
Appointed a missionary to Canada..... 50
Member of the committee on union with the Associate Reformed Church..... 86
Skillman, Elder Abraham, on the committee to organize Blawenburgh Church..... 168
Smith, Dr. John Blair, referred to..... 102
Dr. Robert, referred to..... 102
Dr. Samuel Stanhope, referred to.....60, 102
Rev. William Richmond, pastor of Shannock and Harlingen Churches..... 60
Death of..... 99
Sermon at funeral of, by Dr. Labagh..... 100
Sketch of the family history of..... 102
Third pastor of Harlingen Church..... 186
Referred to..... 252
Somerset County, New Jersey, character of early settlers of..... 146
Religious history..... 146
Bible Society, organization of..... 67

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Steddiford, Rev. Peter, officiates at Dr. Labagh's installation at Harlingen 61
One of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society, 69
Stouber, Rev. M., labors of in Sunday school cause 79
Striker, James, commissioner to confer with commissioners of Associate Reformed Church 91
Strong, Rev. Paschal N., signs the proposed plan of union with Associate Reformed Church 96
Stryker, Dr. Peter I., one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society 70
Sunday schools, origin of 78
The first in Somerset County 81
Opposition to at Harlingen 82
Progress of 83
Final success of 85

Talmage, Rev. James R., presides at Dr. Labagh's resignation of his charge at Harlingen 181
Taylor, Dr. Benjamin C., statement of, in regard to Rev. Elias Van Bunschooten's donation and bequest 74
Referred to 142
Ten Eyck, Rev. Conrad, appointed a missionary to Canada 49
Referred to 254
Tennent, Rev. Gilbert, extract from letter of 148
Theological Seminary of Reformed Dutch Church, effort to re-organize 113
Success of the effort 121
Liberal contributions of the ministry to 122
Effort to enlarge the library of 124
Agency to Holland for 125
Agency given up 127
Thomson, Rev. William M., referred to 161

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Tillotson, Archbishop John, extract from sermon of..... 238
Tract Society, American, referred to..... 138
True Reformed Dutch Church. See CHURCH.

Van Bunschooten, Rev. Elias, sketch of the life and services of, 72
Munificent gift of, to General Synod..... 74
Remains of, disinterred and taken to New Brunswick..... 76
Singular incident at their disinterment..... 77

Van Derveer, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence, referred to....193, 214, 250
Van Dyke, Leonard B., difficulties in connection with..... 140
Extract from pamphlet relating to case of..... 141
Van Harlingen, Rev. Johannes Martenus, second pastor of Harlingen Church..... 186
Van Vechten, Hon. Abraham, draws up Van Bunschooten Bequest..... 76
Member of committee on Dr. Froeligh's secession.... 130
Dr. Jacob, appointed a missionary to Canada..... 62
Letter of, in regard to Dr. Labagh..... 250
Van Vranken, Dr. Samuel A., member of committee on Dr. Froeligh's secession..... 130
Delivers a charge at an installation..... 198
Takes part in the services at Dr. Labagh's funeral 214, 215
Vredenbergh, Rev. John S., one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 69
Mrs. John S., aids in establishing first Sunday school at Somerville..... 81
Tragic history of family of..... 81
Vroom, Hon. Peter D., speaks on Colonization..... 136

Waldron, Resolvert, referred to..... 185
Watts, Dr. Isaac, referred to..... 147

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Weir, Silas E., signs proposed plan of union..... 96
Williamson, Rev. N. Dubois, early recollections of, in regard to Dr. Labagh..... 242
Wilson, Dr. Peter, obituary of Mrs. Labagh, by..... 12
Sketch of the life of..... 24
Character of, as a scholar and teacher..... 25
Referred to..... 133, 207
Witherspoon, Dr. John, referred to..... 102, 103
Wyckoff, Dr. Isaac N., invited to settle at Harlingen, but declines..... 111

Zabriskie, Rev. John L., one of the founders of Somerset County Bible Society..... 70

Digitized by Google

ERRATA.

On page vi, Preface, instead of, "although it was *taken* from a daguerreotype taken," &c., read, "although it was *copied* from a daguerreotype taken," &c.

On page 43, instead of, "*Babal*," read, "*Babel*."

On page 44, instead of "*where*." read "*were*."

On page 52, instead of, J. *D.* Schermerhorn," read, "J. *F.* Schermerhorn."

On page 69, instead of, "*John Vredenbergh*," read, "*John S. Vredenbergh*."

On page 70, the name "*Schenck*," referring to the Rev. William C. Schenck, is erroneously inserted among the names of laymen.

On page 72, instead of, "*Schagticoke*," read, "*Schaghticoke*."

On page 132, instead of, "house of its *friend*," read, "house of its *friends*."

On page 147, instead of, "the Rev. Dr. Colman, of *England*," read, "the Rev. Dr. Colman, of *New England*."

On page 250, instead of, "Mrs. Lawrence *Vanderveer*," read, "Mrs. Lawrence *Van Derveer*."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Princeton University Library
32101 063841132

Digitized by Google